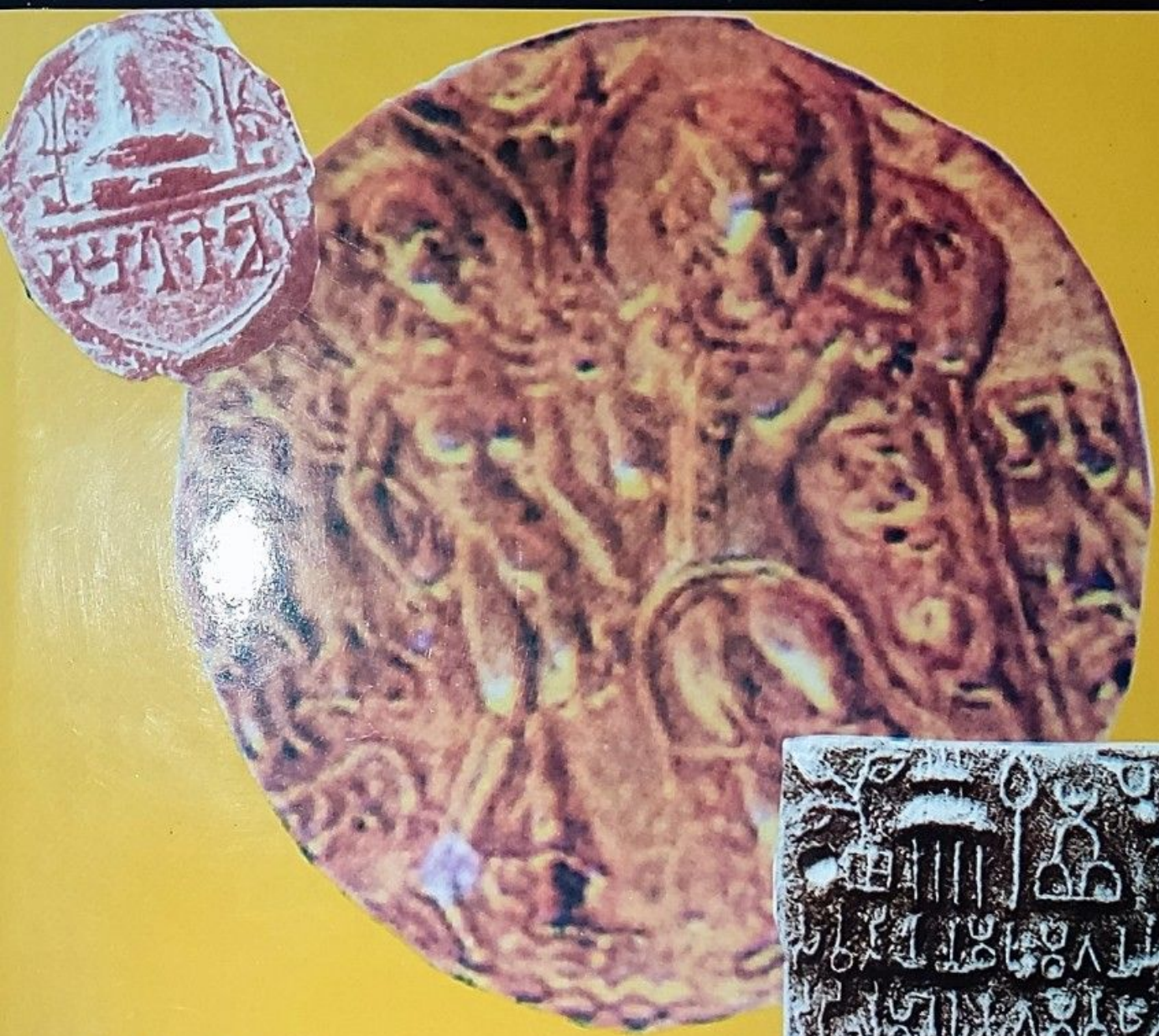
A CULTURAL HISTORY OF NORTHERN INDIA

(Based on Epigraphical Sources from the 3rd Century. B.C. to 700 A.D



K.M. Bhadri

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

ABOUT THE BOOK

It is for the first time that Shri Bhadri has made cultural history of a well-defined area as the main theme of his study. From this point of view the work is of invaluable merit and breaks new ground. Even a casual perusal of the thesis shows that many new facts on the cultural history of North India have been brought to light for the first time.

Dr. K.V. Ramesh

The present thesis, for the first time, presents us with the epigraphical data bearing on all aspects of the cultural history of North India during the early period in all their variety and vividness.

Dr. Ajay Mitra Shastri

It was my great pleasure to read the thesis of K.M. Bhadri entitled "A Cultural Study of North Indian Inscriptions (3rd century B.C. to 700 A.D.)". In the course of my career I have read a great many theses, both Indian and American and consider this to be one of the very most thorough I have encountered. It is thus my recommendation that the Ph.D. degree be awarded with distinction, if that is possible and that the thesis be published.

Frederick M. Asher

Rs. 2990.00

ISBN 81-85638-18-7

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Based on Epigraphical Sources from the 3rd Century B.C. to 700 A.D.)

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Dr. K.M. Bhadri

BOOK INDIA PUBLISHING CO.
Delhi-110035
2006

First Edition 2006

© Dr. K.M. Bhadri

ISBN 81-85638-18-7

Published by :
Vidya Ram Sharma
on behalf of
BOOK INDIA PUBLISHING CO.
68-C LIG DDA Flats,
Rampura, Delhi-110035
Phone : 27392916

Laser Typesetting by :
BANSAL ENTERPRISES
WZ A-43 Prem Nagar,
Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059
Phone : 9818180776
E-mail - m_pbansal@yahoo.co.in.

Printed at :
EXCEL PRINTERS
Naraina Industrial Area
New Delhi-110028

DEDICATED TO MY PARENTS

Dedicated to My late lamented father

Madhvacharya Venkataramanacharya Bhadri

(1923-1989)

Smt. Bhagirathibai and Shri. Madhvacharya Bhadri

CONTENTS

Preface ---- IX-X
Foreword ---- XI-XII
List of Illustrations ---- XIII
Abbreviations ---- XIV-XVIII
System of Transliteration ---- XIX
Introduction ---- XX-XXVI
Chapter I : Administration ---- 1-38
Mauryan Administration ---- 1
Administration in the post-Mauryan period ---- 6
Gupta Administration ---- 14
Administration in the post-Gupta period ---- 21
References ---- 30
Chapter II : Military System ---- 39-62
Military System of the Mauryan period ---- 39
Military System of the post-Mauryan period ---- 40
Military System of the Guptas ---- 44
Military System of the post-Gupta period ---- 51
References ---- 58
Chapter III : Judiciary ---- 63-82
Judiciary in the Mauryan period ---- 63
Judiciary in the post-Mauryan period ---- 66
Judiciary of the Guptas ---- 70

Judiciary in the post-Gupta period ---- 74
References ---- 80
Chapter IV : Social Conditions ---- 84-121
Caste system ---- 84
Slavery ---- 90
Marriage ---- 91
Women ---- 93
Courtesans ---- 96
Food and Drink ---- 97
Dress and Ornaments ---- 101
Entertainments ---- 103
Public utility works ---- 106
Place names and personal names ---- 110
References ---- 112
Chapter V : Economic Conditions ---- 122-151
Agriculture ---- 122
Trade and Industries ---- 132
Weights, Measures and Coins ---- 136
Transport ---- 139
Other professions ---- 140
Guilds ---- 142
References ---- 144
Chapter VI : Education ---- 152-173
Royal Education ---- 152
Teachers ---- 155
Students ---- 158
Subjects of study ---- 159
Writing materials ---- 163
Educational Institutions ---- 163
References ---- 168

Chapter VII : Religious Conditions ---- 174-254
Buddhism ---- 174
Jainism ---- 190
Ājīvikas ---- 198
Brahmanism ---- 199
Revival of the sacrificial cult ---- 199
Vaishnaism ---- 202
Śaivism ---- 212
Worship of Dēvī ---- 219
Sun-Worship ---- 222
Worship of Kārttikēya ---- 226
The Nāga Cult ---- 227
Religious Practices ---- 230
Tolerance ---- 235
References ---- 237
Chapter VIII : Language, Literature and Script ---- 255-302
Prakrit ---- 257
Mixed dialect ---- 264
Sanskrit ---- 264
Epigraphical Literature ---- 266
Brāmī ---- 283
Siddhamātrikā ---- 289
Kharōshthī ---- 290
References ---- 292
Bibliography ---- 303-310
Index ---- 311-360
Palaeographical Tables ---- 361-363
Illustrations ---- I-XVI

PREFACE

Reconstruction of the past is a continuous process, because theories and speculations have to be revised from time to time in the light of ever-growing discovery of new historical material and new interpretation of the existing data. Epigraphy is an important source for reconstructing ancient Indian history and culture. The pioneering work of scholars like Prinsep, Hultzsch, Fleet and Bhandarkar, has placed Epigraphy as an important branch of Indological studies on a solid footing.

The present work embodies my thesis submitted to the University of Mysore for the Ph.D. degree. It is the result of my humble attempt at a cultural study of North Indian inscriptions belonging to the period between 3rd Century B.C. to 700 A.D.

Words fail to express my sense of gratitude to Dr. K.V. Ramesh, Retired Joint Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, under whose guidance this work was prepared. But for his inspiration and guidance, I could not have undertaken and completed this work. I have been benefited by his sound scholarship in the subject in writing this work.

I am grateful to Dr. A.V. Narasimha Murthy, Retired Professor and Head of the Ancient History and Archaeology Department, University of Mysore, for guiding me through the technicalities of the production and submission of the thesis. I am also thankful to Dr. B.K. Gururajarao, Retired Reader of the same department for encouraging me by his repeated enquiries regarding the progress of this work.

Prof. Ajay Mitra Shastri has blessed me with his foreword. His critical assessment has enhanced the value of this work. I am highly indebted to him for this kind gesture.

I sincerely thank Shri Madhav N. Katti, Retired Director (Epigraphy) for encouraging and supporting me whole heartedly in the course of preparation of this work.

My special thanks are due to Late Pandit V.S. Subrahmanyam for his kind help in the preparation of the chapter - 'Language, Literature and Scripts'.

My thanks are due to my colleagues Late Dr. S.P. Tewari, Late Dr. S.S. Iyer, Dr. Venkatesh (since retired) and Dr. C.A. Padmanabha Shastry, Superintending Epigraphist, for their help in this work.

Dr. M.D. Sampath, Retired Director (Epigraphy) has helped me in every possible way in not only finalizing the thesis but also making it press ready. I have carried each and every problem of this work to him to get a practical solution. I am beholden to him for his personal interest in the publication of this work.

I thank my colleague Shri Karuppaiah, Asstt. Superintending Epigraphist (then the Librarian in this office) for promptly providing me the books I needed and for his personal interest in my work.

Shri P. Natarajan, Retired Stenographer and Mrs. M. Rani have done the typing and Xeroxing of the thesis excellently. I express my sincere thanks to them.

I am thankful to Shri G. Srinivasa Rao, Photographer of the Office of Director (Epigraphy), A.S.I., Mysore for kindly providing excellent photographs incorporated in this work.

My wife Smt. Shalini has encouraged me throughout the writing of this book and making it press ready. Her keen interest and persistent enquiries have goaded me to arrange for the publication of this work now atleast. She will be happier than me to see this work down in black and white. My sincere thanks are due to her.

My special thanks are due to my grandson Chi. Aditya Karnam (8 years) for evincing keen interest in the index work and helping his grandmother in finalising it.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Shri Vidyaram Sharma, proprietor of M/s. Book India, New Delhi and for undertaking the publication of this book Shri Parveen Bansal for the excellent work of composing and setting of this book.

K. M. BHADRI

Mysore
12-10-2005
Vijayadaśami

FOREWORD

The inestimable value of epigraphy as important source of early Indian history has been widely recognized; in fact, but for epigraphic records running into thousands and thousands our knowledge of Indian annals would have been next to nil. Till recently, however, inscriptions, like coins, were harnessed primarily for reconstructing political or dynastic history alone. Of late, however, it has been realized that cultural history comprehending socio-economic and religious as well as other facets of life is equally, if not more, important and interesting. And while most of the earlier writings on the cultural history heavily leaned on literary sources of uncertain chronology and areas, not to speak of the exact locality, of composition and comparatively little attention was paid to inscriptions, in recent years the value of epigraphs for this purpose has been appreciated in certain quarters and we now have some works dwelling upon various facets of the cultural history of a particular period and area taking into consideration the inscriptional evidence as well.

The present work of Dr. Bhadri, is, however, the first of its kind inasmuch as it offers us with the epigraphical data bearing on all the aspects of the cultural history of North India during the early period in all their variety and vividness. By North India Dr. Bhadri means the whole of the Indo-Pakistan-Bangaladesh sub-continent to the north of the river Narmada including the eastern states of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the western states of Gujarat and Rajasthan in present-day India together with Pakistan and Bangladesh which formed part of pre-independent India. He takes into consideration all the inscriptions dating from the Maurya emperor Aśoka's reign (third century B.C.) to *circa* 700 A.D., so as to cover the reign of Harshavardhana.

In eight comprehensive chapters which the work consists of he critically discusses various facets of the non-political history encompassing administration, military system, judiciary, socio-economic conditions, education, religion as well as languages, literature and scripts primarily on the basis of epigraphical data. It stands to his credit that in several cases he has tried to corroborate and supplement these data with numismatic and literary evidences though, naturally, it has its own limits.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abhilekh.	=	*Aśoka Ke Abhilekha* (in Hindi), by R.B. Pandey.
ADM.	=	*Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, by Romila Thapar.
AE.	=	*Asoka's Edicts*, by A. Sen.
AGK.	=	*Archaeology of Gujarat and Kathiawar*, by H.D. Sankalia.
AHI.	=	*Advanced History of India*, by K.A. Nilakanta Sastri and G. Srinivasachari.
AHS.	=	*Ancient History of Saurashtra*, By K.J. Virji.
AIE.	=	*Ancient Indian Education*, by R.K. Mookerji.
AIG.	=	*The Age of the Imperial Guptas*, by R.D. Banerji.
AIPTI.	=	*Ancient Indian Political Thought and Institutions*, by B.A. Saletore.
AIU.	=	*The Age of Imperial Unity*, Ed. by R.C. Majumdar and A.D. Pusalkar.
AK.	=	*The Age of the Kushāṇas*, by Bhaskar Chattopadhyay.
Alphabet.	=	*The Alphabet*, by David Diringer.
Anthology.	=	*An Anthology of Sanskrit Inscriptions*, by B. Ch. Chhabra.
Apte.	=	*The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, by V.S. Apte.
APIIAI.	=	*Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India*, by R.S. Sharma.
ARIE.	=	*Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy.*
ASAI.	=	*The Agrarian system in Ancient India, by U.N. Ghoshal.*
ASIAR.	=	*Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report.*
AWAI.	=	*The Art of War in Ancient India*, by P.C. Chakravarti.

Bk.	=	Bhaṭṭikāvya.
Buddhism.	=	*2500 Years of Buddhism*, Ed. by P.V. Bapat.
CA.	=	*The Classical Age*, Ed. by R.C. Majumdar and A.D. Pusalkar.
CAI.	=	*Coins of Ancient India*, by V.A. Smith.
CCAI.	=	*Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India*, by J. Allan.
CCGDS.	=	*Catalogue of the Coins of the Gupta Dynasties and of Śaśānka, king of Gauḍa*, by J. Allan.
CHI.	=	*A Cultural History of India*, Ed. by A. L. Basham.
Childers.	=	*A Dictionary of the Pali language*, by R.C. Childers.
CHJ.	=	*A Comprehensive History of Jainism* by A.K. Chatterjee.
CI.	=	*The Coins of India*, by C.J. Brown.
CIGC.	=	*Corpus of Indo-Greek Coins*, by A.N. Lahiri.
CII.	=	*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.*
CLAI.	=	*Corporate Life in Ancient India*, by R.C. Majumdar.
CPAI.	=	*Crime and Punishment in Ancient India*, by Sukla Das.
DHI.	=	*The Development of Hindu Iconography*, by J.N. Banerjea.
Ed.	=	Edited/Edited by/Editor
Edn.	=	Edition.
EHK.	=	*The Early History of Kaliṅga*, by D.N. Das.
EIR.	=	*Early Indian Religions*, by P. Banerjee.
EK.	=	*The Early Kushāṇas*, by Baldev Kumar.
ELNIGP.	=	*The Economic Life of Northern India in Gupta Period*, by S.K. Maity.
Enl.	=	Enlarged
Ep. Ind.	=	*Epigraphia Indica.*
GE.	=	*The Gupta Empire*, by R.K. Mookerji.
GP.	=	*The Gupta Polity*, by V.R.R. Dikshitar.
HAI.	=	*Hindu Administrative Institutions*, by V.R.R. Dikshitar.
HC.	=	*Harshacharita*
HCCTH.	=	*Harshacharita*, Translation by E.B. Cowell and P.W. Thomas.
HDS.	=	*History of Dharmaśāstra*, by P.V. Kane.
HHT.	=	*Harsha and His Times*, by B.N. Sharma.

HIA.	=	*History of Indian Administration*, by B.N. Puri.
HIG.	=	*Historical Inscriptions of Gujarat*, by G.V. Acharya.
HK.	=	*History of Kanauj*, by R.S. Tripathi.
HP.	=	*Hindu Polity*, by K.P. Jayaswal.
HPMBS.	=	*The History and Palaeography of Mauryan Brāhmı Script*, by C.S. Upasak.
HPS.	=	*Harsha A Political Study*, by D. Devahuti.
HSL.	=	*A History of Sanskrit Literature*, by A.B. Keith.
IAA.	=	*Indian Arms and Armour*, by G.N. Pant.
IB.	=	*The Inscriptions of Bihar*, by B. Sahai.
IC.	=	*Indian Culture.*
IE(R).	=	*Indian Epigraphy*, by K.V. Ramesh.
IE(S).	=	*Indian Epigraphy*, by D.C. Sircar.
IEG.	=	*Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, by D.C. Sircar.
IESIS.	=	*Indian Epigraphy and South Indian Scripts*, by C. Sivaramamurti.
IMLGPY.	=	*Inscriptions of the Maukharis, Later Guptas, Pushpabhūtis and Yaśōvarman of Kanauj*, by K.K. Thaplyal.
Ind. Ant.	=	*Indian Antiquary.*
India.	=	*India, What can it teach us ?* by F. Max Muller.
IP(B).	=	*Indian Palaeography*, by G. Bühler.
IP(D).	=	*Indian Palaeography*, by A.H. Dani.
IP(P).	=	*Indian Palaeography*, by R.B. Pandey.
IPT.	=	*Indian Palaeographical Tables*, by G. Bühler.
ITP.	=	*India in the Time of Patañjali*, by B.N. Puri.
IUK.	=	*India under the Kushāṇas*, by B.N. Puri.
IVMDEE.	=	*Indus Valley to Mekong Delta Explorations in Epigraphy*, Ed. by N. Karashima.
JAAI.	=	*Judicial Administration in Ancient India*, by B. Nath.
JBBRAS.	=	*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
JESI.	=	*Journal of Epigraphical Society of India.*
JI.	=	*The Jaina Iconography*, by B.C. Bhattacharya.
JRAS.	=	*Journal of Royal Asiatic Society.*

JUPHS.	=	*Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society.*
KA.	=	*Khāravela and Aśoka*, by Shashi Kant.
KAS.	=	*Kauṭilyam Arthaśāstram*, Ed. by R. Shama Sastri.
KAST.	=	*Kauṭilya's Arthaśastra*, English Tr. by R. Shama Sastri.
KP.	=	*Kāvyaprakāśa.*
KSIS.	=	*Kushāṇa State and Indian Society*, by B. Chattopadhyay.
Legge.	=	*A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, Tr. by J. Legge.
LGA.	=	*Life in the Gupta Age*, by R.N. Saletore.
LGAI.	=	*Local Government in Ancient India*, by R.K. Mookerji.
Life (or *Beal*)	=	*The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*, by Shaman Hwui Li. with an introduction, etc. by Samuel Beal.
List.	=	*A List of Brāhmı Inscriptions* (Appendix to *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. X), by H. Lüders.
Manu.	=	*Manusmriti*, Ed. by Vasudevashaıma.
MASI.	=	*Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India.*
Mat. Ins.	=	*Mathurā Inscriptions*, Ed. by K.L. Janert.
McCrindle.	=	*Ancient India as described by Magasthenes and Arrian*, Tr. by J.W. McCrindle.
MIC.	=	*Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilization*, Ed. by J. Marshall.
MK.	=	*Mrichchhakaṭikam*, Ed. by M.R. Kale.
MP.	=	*The Mauryan Polity*, by V.R.R. Dikshitar.
MS.	=	*The Monuments of Sāñchı*, by J. Marshall and others (Reprint).
MSAI.	=	*The Military System in Ancient India*, by B.K. Majumdar.
Pāṇini.	=	*Ashṭādhāyı*, Ed. by Sitaramasastri.
PGP.	=	*Post-Gupta Polity*, by G.P. Sinha.
PHAI.	=	*Political History of Ancient India*, by H.C. Raychaudhuri.
PI.	=	*The Palaeography of India* (in Hindi), by G.H. Ojha.
PP.	=	*Prāchya Pratibhā.*
Pratāpa.	=	*Pratāparudrayaśōbhūshaṇa*, Ed. by K.P. Trivedi.
RAA.	=	*Religion in Art and Archaeology*, by J.N. Banerjea.
Rev.	=	Revised/Revised by
RHAI.	=	*A Religious History of Ancient India*, by S.R. Goyal.

RIMIGIGV.	=	*Reh Inscription of Menander and the Indo-Greek Invasion of the Gaṅgā Valley*, by G.R. Sharma.
SAI.	=	*Śūdras in Ancient India*, by R.S. Sharma.
SAIS.	=	*Studies in Ancient Indian Seals*, by K.K. Thaplyal.
Sel. Ins.	=	*Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization*, by D.C. Sircar.
SGAI.	=	*State and Government in Ancient India*, by A.S. Altekar.
SHMCOS.	=	*The Script of Harappa and Mohenjodaro and its Connection with other Scripts*, by G.R. Hunter.
SI(C).	=	*The Sakas in India*, by S. Chattopadhyaya.
SI(S).	=	*The Śakas in India*, by Satya Shrava.
SICH.	=	*Studies in Indian Cultural History*, by P.K. Gode.
SLNI.	=	*Social Life in Northern India*, by Brijnarain Sharma.
SRELCB.	=	*Socio-Religious, Economic and Literary Condition of Bihar*, by B.S. Verma.
SRLAMI.	=	*Studies in the Religious Life of Ancient and Medieval India*, by D.C. Sircar.
SSAAMI.	=	*Studies in the Society and Administration of Ancient and Medieval India*, by D.C. Sircar.
SWAI.	=	*Sun-Worship in Ancient India*, by V.C. Srivastava.
Tr.	=	Translation/Translated
Vol./Vols.	=	Volume/Volumes.
VSMRS.	=	*Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems*, by R.G. Bhandarkar.
WAI.	=	*War in Ancient India*, by V.R.R. Dikshitar.
Watters.	=	*On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, by T. Watters.
Williams.	=	*A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, by Monier Williams.

SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

आ	=	ā	ई	=	ī	ऊ	=	ū
ऋ	=	ṛ	ए	=	ē	ओ	=	ō
ङ	=	ṅ	च	=	ch	छ	=	chh
ञ	=	ñ	ट	=	ṭ	ठ	=	ṭh
ड	=	ḍ	ढ	=	ḍh	ण	=	ṇ
श	=	ś	ष	=	sh	ळ	=	ḷ

anusvāra = ṁ visarga = ḥ

upadhmānīya = ḅ jihvāmūlīya = ḫ

INTRODUCTION

Of late there has been a significant shift in the trend of Indian historical researches. Details of battles, wars and kings and their courts, which once pervaded the pages of books on history, are gradually yielding place to writings on various cultural aspects like socio-economic conditions, agrarian system, education, language and literature, etc. Political history, as forming a chronological-cum-historical framework for the study of human activities and achievements in different fields of life, can never be belittled. The ultimate aim of all historical researches should be to reach the common man, and to record his hopes, beliefs, customs, achievements, failures, etc. It is, therefore, but natural that the importance of the study of cultural history is being increasingly realised.

Many works have been published on the history of North India. Almost all these works, primarily dealing with the dynastic history of North India, include as corollary a chapter or chapters on contemporary cultural life. But, in such works, it is the dynastic history which matters more than the cultural conditions of the period.

The importance of epigraphy as a source of ancient Indian history cannot be exaggerated. But it may be noted that in writing about the cultural conditions of ancient India, this source has not been fully utilised. In fact, in such writings the valuable epigraphical evidence is either not fully appreciated or overshadowed by the literary sources. This is so because, whatever may be the value of epigraphy as a source of history, the information it furnishes is piecemeal in most cases, and often wanting in details as compared to literary sources. Therefore, it is natural for a writer interested in furnishing a connected and complete picture of cultural history to have a preference for the latter over the former.

It is in this background that a cultural study of North Indian inscriptions has been taken up. In this work I have made as exhaustive a study of North Indian Inscriptions as possible, from the point of cultural history. As is obvious from the title of the work itself, inscriptions form the main source of our study. But, being fully aware of the limitations of the epigraphical sources, as stated earlier, I have also utilised literary and numismatic sources to corroborate and supplement the information culled out of the

epigrapical source wherever necessary. In fact, numismatics forms part of epigraphy itself so far as the legends on the coins are concerned.

Whatever may be the universally accepted definition of the term *culture*, here I have taken it in its widest sense to include all human activity, not restricting it to stand only for religion, fine arts, literature, etc. It has been my attempt in this work to cull out all available information from the inscriptions, and to analyse and present it in eight different chapters, *viz.*, (1) Administration, (2) Military System, (3) Judiciary, (4) Social Conditions, (5) Economic Conditions, (6) Education, (7) Religious Conditions and (8) Language, Literature and Script. In view of the vastness of the subject and the long period chosen for study, a separate chapter on political background has not been included in this work, lest it should be too bulky. However, brief accounts of the political events have been incorporated wherever necessary.

Geographically, this study extends over the whole region that is situated to the north of the Vindhyan range, including the eastern states of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the western states of Gujarat and Rajasthan, and Pakistan and Bangladesh, these two countries having earlier formed part of India. This is the region wherein northern political powers like the Mauryas, Guptas and Maitrakas were born and ruled, and the alien powers like the Indo-Greeks and Kushāṇas wielded their scepter. In terms of time, this study commences from the reign of the Mauryan emperor Aśoka (in the third century B.C.) whose edicts are the earliest epigraphical records of India, and ends with that of Harshavardhana around 700 A.D. I am aware of the fact that the period chosen for this study does not cover the whole of the ancient period of Indian history. But then, the number of inscriptions available from 700 A.D. to the end of the ancient period is too big to be included in a work commencing from the third century B.C. Secondly, the death of Harsha, probably in 647 A.D., marks the end of a glorious epoch in the history of North India. It is for these reasons that I have restricted this study to 700 A.D.

For the sake of convenience, in the first three chapters, the treatment of the subject has been distributed into four different periods, *viz.*, (1) The Mauryan period, (2) The post-Mauryan period, (3) The Gupta period and (4) The post-Gupta period. Such a periodical treatment of the subject, in the first three chapters, is necessitated by the inconsistency in the availability of information throughout the period of this study. From the fourth chapter onwards this pattern has been changed. Here the discussion of a topic (e.g., 'Caste System') covers the whole period under study. This change, again, is due to the nature of the subjects dealt with in the five chapters.

'The Mauryan period' here refers to the reign of Aśoka, 'the post-Mauryan period', to the period between the fall of the Mauryan empire and the rise of the Imperial Guptas, 'the Gupta period', to the reign of the Imperial Guptas, the 'the post-Gupta period', to the period between the fall of the Gupta empire and 700 A.D. For the

sake of convenience I have included the reign of the early Maitraka rulers in the post-Gupta period, though strictly speaking they are junior contemporaries of the Imperial Guptas.

Chapter I

This chapter deals with the geographical extent of the empire under different dynasties, major and minor territorial divisions, Central and Provincial governments, Council of Ministers, officials and their functions, and allied topics. All these topics are not to be found uniformly in the treatment of all the four periods mentioned above. Depending on the availability of the source material there is less or more information furnished in the discussion of the different subjects during different periods. This holds good with reference to the second and third chapters also.

Creation of the posts of *Dharmamahāmātras* is a special feature of Aśoka's administration. The very fact that these officials approached the whole populace of the empire, irrespective of caste and creed and socio-economic status, and preached the *Dharma*, the moral code as conceived by the emperor, is a clear indication of his earnest desire to bring about social harmony among his subjects. Likewise, the institution of the post of *Ithijhaka-mahāmātra* shows the concern of the emperor for the welfare of the womenfolk. It is to be noted here that, as pointed out, the *Ithijhaka-mahāmātra* was concerned with the womenfolk in general as against the *Gaṇikādhyaksha* of the *Arthaśāstra* who was obviously an official in charge of the affairs of *gaṇikās* or the courtesans.

It is difficult, if not impossible, for an alien power to rule over the people of a conquered country or region by dint of the power of arms alone. Consolidation of political power in a newly conquered region requires a proper understanding, appreciation and assimilation of the customs and manners of the native people. Such a deliberate step was taken by the Kshatrapas of Mathurā and Western India in adopting the Indian titles and designations in their administrative system. Another such measure to establish total monarchy, with supreme power vested in the king, is to be found in the conscious efforts of the Kushāṇa rulers through the deification of the king by means of assuming titles like *Dēvaputra* and by building temples in honour of their deceased predecessors. This phenomenon is also witnessed in the titles like *Achintyapúrusha* of Samudragupta. It may be noted that Aśoka was content with the title *Dēvānāmpriya*, and never tried to project himself as a superhuman being.

The actual existence of Administrative Boards, represented by various classes of the rural population, for the administration of the District towns and villages, as evidenced in the Dāmōdarpur copper-plates, serves as a forerunner to the concept and practice of the *Panchāyatrāj*.

Chapter II

In the second chapter I have discussed about the different wings of the army, military officials and offices, weapons of war, military camps, role of semi-military guilds and kindred topics. A brief survey of the valour and military abilities of the different ruling families forms a sort of preamble to the discussion of their military system.

The importance attached to elephantry in ancient Indian warfare is borne out by the fact that special attention was paid to the breeding and taming of elephants under Aśoka and Khāravela of Kaliṅga.

As gleaned from their coins, the superiority of cavalry in general, and of horse-archery in particular, was one of the factors which facilitated the military success of the Greek, Scythian and Parthian invaders of India. So far as the epigraphical evidence goes, the use of chariots in warfare seems to have ceased after the times of Khāravela of Kaliṅga though the epithet *Apratiratha* was applied to the rulers of the subsequent period too, albeit in a conventional fashion. And, the use of the naval power for military purposes, by Aśoka, the Imperial Guptas, and some of the rulers of the post-Gupta period is attested to by epigraphical references, both direct and indirect.

Whatever might be the moral and religious ideas of a ruler, he cannot afford to lay down his arms as long as he holds the reigns of administration. That is why, even after the Kaliṅga war, Aśoka, despite his conversion to Buddhism, had maintained an efficient army to face any contingency.

An important feature of the Imperial Gupta military system was the maintenance of a sizeable army by the provincial governors. Another such feature is the probable compulsory military training to all those who entered the royal service under the Imperial Gupta rulers. Lastly, the epigraphs of the Gupta and Maitraka periods attest to the existence of the semi-military guilds and their employment in warfare.

Chapter III

Though entitled 'Judiciary', this chapter deals with both the judicial and police systems. It contains discussions on the concept of Indian jurisprudence, judicial and police officials, guild-courts, district town boards and village administrative boards as law courts, crime and punishment and similar topics.

In the concept of Indian jurisprudence the law of land was the supreme authority in the matter of judiciary. Even though the *śrutis* and *smṛitis* formed the sheet-anchor of the ancient Indian judiciary, the regional customs and traditions were equally important. These latter commanded high respect in judicial matters as instanced in the charter of Vishṇushēṇa. Aśoka's concern for a proper and impartial judicial administration and for humane treatment to the prisoners is well attested to in his edicts.

Chapter IV

The fourth chapter contains a detailed discussion on Caste system, Slavery, Marriage, Women, Courtesans, Food and Drinks, Dress and Ornaments, Entertainments, Public utility works and place names and personal names.

The Varṇāśama system has been the most striking feature of the Indian society since very early times. This system also prevailed in the days of Aśoka and the Śuṅgas. Though the alien rule in North India in the post-Mauryan period had some impact on the Varṇāśrama system, yet the latter could not be disturbed considerably because, these foreigners themselves had developed an inclination towards Indian culture. The picture presented by the epigraphs of the post-Mauryan period is one of a general degradation of the Varṇāśrama institution on the one hand, and deliberate efforts on the part of both foreign and Indian rulers to support it on the other. The revival of the Varṇāśrama system under the auspices of the Imperial Guptas forms part of the cultural renaissance that synchronised with the Gupta Age. The ideals of the Imperial Gupta rulers with regard to the Varṇāśrama institution were emulated by their successors. A noteworthy feature of this system that prevailed in the Gupta and post-Gupta periods is its non-rigidity. Thus, we come across instances of individuals taking to professions not prescribed for their castes. On the whole, the Varṇāśrama system was perceived in its proper perspective and practised as a disciplinary code for the smooth running of the social life.

Inter-caste marriage and polygamy prevailed in the ancient Indian society. They were of common occurrence in the royal families. But the epigraphical source is of little help to know the common man's approach in this regard.

The womenfolk enjoyed great respect in the ancient Indian societies in general. They had greater freedom, especially in religious life, during the alien rule in the post-Mauryan period. Buddhism and Jainism encouraged women to participate in the religious activities. Thus, we hear of the religious gifts made and the scholarship attained by women. But, as can be expected in a patriarchal society, women were considered inferior to men in the religious organisation of the Buddhists.

The greatness of a society lies in the consideration as to to what extent its government and aristocracy concern themselves with the affairs of the common man and contribute to raise his living standard. Epigraphs of the period under study reveal a number of instances of philanthropy. They illustrate how throughout the period rulers, officials and rich people were interested in the welfare of the general public, especially of the poor class in the society, and endeavoured to do whatever they could to make the life of the common man comfortable.

Chapter V

In the fifth chapter I have discussed about Agriculture, Trade and Industries, Weights, Measures and Coins, Transport, other professions and Guilds.

An oft-discussed but unsettled topic of socio-economic history of ancient India is the ownership of land. Aśokan inscriptions are of no help in this matter. Indications are clear to hold that under both the Kshatrapas and Imperial Guptas the ownership of land was vested with the king and the royal family. But the Maitraka charters attest to the private ownership of land by cultivators and Brāhmaṇas as well.

The guilds of merchants and artisans played a very significant role in the socio-economic and religious life of ancient Indian society. They served as Local Banks, and were known for the honest and fair dealings. They undertook the responsibility of maintaining religious services by accepting deposits from the pious people. Thus, they had an active participation in the affairs of common people though their primary concern was trade and commerce.

Chapter VI

The sixth chapter deals with Royal education, Teachers, Students, Subjects of study, Writing materials and Educational institutions.

It is in the fitness of things that in ancient India royal personages received a much superior education than that of the common man, for the whole burden of administering the kingdom rested with them. These persons were responsible for protecting the people, the customs and traditions and the culture of the land over which they ruled. To successfully carry out these responsibilities it was necessary for royal persons to study various sciences and arts. It is, therefore, that the curriculum of royal education consisted of various sciences beginning with the military training and included subjects like the *Vēdas*, the *Dharmaśāstras*, poetics, music and other fine and performing arts.

Whatever we come to know from inscriptions with regard to the education of the common people solely pertains to religious study. Thus, we come to know the different terms employed to denote the teachers and students of the Buddhistic, the Jaina and the Vedic systems of education, and the different subjects studied under these systems. Inscriptions are silent on such vital topics as the relation between the teacher and the taught, the Gurukula system of learning and the mode of study. Therefore, it may be reasonably stated that inscriptions form an inadequate source for reconstructing the ancient Indian educational system in detail.

Chapter VII

In this chapter there is a discussion on Buddhism, Jainism, Ājīvika system and Hinduism. An account of the sects and sub-sects and rituals and practices of these religions, and the vicissitudes through which they passed have been given here.

The prosperous state of Buddhism and Jainism in the Mauryan and post-Mauryan periods clearly illustrates the vital role of royal patronage in the growth and spread of a religion. These religions were held in high regard and strengthened by rulers like

Aśoka, Khāravela and Kanishka. But for this vigour gained by them, these religions could not have withstood the mighty wave of the revival of Brahmanical religion, despite the liberal and tolerant religious policy of the Imperial Gupta rulers.

Tolerance, eclecticism and freedom are the key-notes of the ancient Indian religious policy. They are manifest throughout the period of this study. Inscriptions furnish numerous instances of these principles. A noble tendency to allow all the religious sects to grow along with one's own creed and an appreciation for the good points of all the religious sects, coupled with freedom to choose one's own faith, virtues which formed the essence of the ancient Indian religious life, are, perhaps, unparalleled in the religious history of human civilisation. It is these and other excellences of the Indian religions that influenced and attracted the foreign invaders of North India.

Chapter VIII

This last chapter highlights the salient features of Prakrit, Mixed dialect and Sanskrit languages, and Brāhmı, Kharōshṭhı and Siddhamātrikā scripts as employed in the epigraphs of the period under discussion and contains a brief survey of the literary excellences of the epigraphs falling within this period.

An obviously close association of Prakrit with Buddhism and Jainism on the one hand, and of Sanskrit with Brahmancial religious sects on the other, is a notable feature of the linguistic aspect of the inscriptions under study. This association clearly illustrates the mutual influence of two different cultural aspects.

In the field of epigraphical literature, inscriptions clearly show the influence of the epics and classical literature. Thus, the language of the Junāgaḍh inscription of Rudradāman shows the epic influence on its language, and the epigraphical compositions of the Gupta and the post-Gupta periods exhibit the impact of the classical composers like Kālidāsa and Bāna. Despite its somewhat technical nature, epigraphical composition could not remain separate from the main flow of the Sanskrit literature.

In spite of the divergent views held regarding its origin, there is no doubt that the Brāhmı script has played a crucial role in the cultural life of historic India. For, it is this script with its ramifications that served as the major medium of the chronicles in the form of inscriptions. Above all, this script is the source of all the present day scripts of India. Therefore, the Brāhmı script may be rightly termed the national alphabet of India.

Contrarily, the Kharōshṭhı script had very little to contribute to Indian culture. Its influence was limited in terms of both time and space. This script could not influence the cultural life of Indians if only because it was not brought into wider use in the subcontinent in a major part of which the Brāhmı script had gained absolute supremacy.

CHAPTER I

ADMINISTRATION

Mauryan Administration

The term Mauryan administration more or less means the administration under the Mauryan emperor Aśoka, because, but for the Sohgaurā plate and the Mahāsthān plaque, which have been ascribed by some scholars to a pre-Aśokan date, we have not found any inscription belonging to a date prior to Aśoka. Even these two records do not furnish any significant information about the administrative system that prevailed immediately before Aśoka. They only refer to some arrangements made for the supply of food grains during famines. And what we know about the administration of Chandragupta Maurya is from the *Arthaśāstra* and the accounts of the Greek writers. Therefore, a study of the Mauryan administration, if based on inscriptions, has to commence only from the time of Aśoka.

Before entering into the subject of administration it is essential to know the extent of the Mauryan empire under Aśoka. For this purpose we have to consider the find spots of the inscriptions of Aśoka on the one hand, and their internal evidence on the other. Of these two means, the former is more important. For, we may safely presume that these inscriptions, containing the proclamations and messages for the subjects, were located at chosen centers of population in different provinces. Some of these are to be found at their borders in various directions. Thus, two sets of the fourteen Rock Edicts are located at Shāhbāzgaṛhı and Mānsehrā in the present N.W.F. Province of Pakistan; another is at Kālsı in the North at the confluence of the rivers Tons and Yamunā; the fourth is at Girnār in Kāthiawār and the fifth at Sōpārā in the Thana District of Maharasthra, the sixth is at Dhauli in Puri District of Orissa; the seventh at Jaugaḍa in the Ganjam District of the same State; and the eighth at Yerraguḍi in the Ananthapur District of Andhra Pradesh. An Aśokan inscription in Aramaic characters has also been discovered at Taxila, the capital of the north-western province of the empire, and another near Jalālābād (E. Afghanistan).

The inclusion of the far south in the Aśokan empire is indicated by three groups of Minor Rock Edicts in the Chitradurga and Bellary Districts of Karnataka. Further, the interior of the country is represented by Minor Rock Edicts installed at places like Rūpnāth in the Jubbulpore District and Pāngurāria in the Sehore District of Madhya Pradesh, Bairāṭ in Rajasthan, Sahasrām in Bihar, Gavimaṭh and Pālkigunḍu and Maski in the Raichur District, and Niṭṭūr and Udegolam in the Bellary District - all in Karnataka.

Besides, there are a number of Pillar Edicts installed at the holy places of Buddhism such as Lurịyā Araraj, Rāmpurvā, Nandangarh and Niglīvā, leading up to Lumbinī, the birth place of the Buddha. Other inscribed pillars were set up in the north in the Districts of Ambala and Meerut, at Kauśāmbī near Allahābād, at Sārnāth and at Sāñchi.

The distribution of the inscriptions clearly indicates that Aśoka's empire included the major part of India, including the North West Frontier Province, but excluding the Indian peninsula to the south of Karnataka. This conclusion is corroborated by the mention in R.E. II of the independent frontier kingdoms of Chōḍas, Pāṇḍyas, Keralaputras, Satiyaputras, as far as the Tāmraparṇi in the south and that of the Greek king Amityaka (Antiochus II) on the west.

The expression *hidarāja*, etc., at the beginning of a sentence in R.E. XIII has been differently interpreted by scholars. Bhandarkar[1] takes the names following this expression, *viz.*, the Yavanas, Kambhojas, etc., as those of subject peoples, occupying some of the frontier districts of Aśoka's empire. But Mookerji[2] prefers to hold the view that they were semi-independent people not under the direct rule of the emperor. His view is based on the fact that these states are separately mentioned. He further holds that the *Āṭavyas* or the forest people, mentioned in the same edict, also formed an autonomous state like the Yavanas and others referred to above.

Even if it is presumed that there were a few semi-independent states, yet there was a vast empire, effective administration of which was a hard task. The difficulty of the situation was solved by establishing centres of authority in a number of places. The whole empire was divided into a number of administrative divisions each placed under a Viceroy. The inscriptions mention four such Viceroys ruling at Taxila, Ujjain, Tōsalī[3] and Suvarṇagiri[4]. From the terms *Kumāra* and *Āryaputra* denoting these Viceroys, it seems that the Viceroyalties were generally reserved for the princes of the royal blood. But, from the Junāgaḍh inscription of Rudradāman[5] we come to know that the western province, with Girnār as its headquarters, was placed under Vaiśya Pushyagupta as the Viceroy (*rāshṭṛiya*), during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya and it was headed by *Yavanarāja* Tushāshpa under emperor Aśoka. Thus, it becomes clear that sometimes, instead of the princes, local chiefs were appointed as Viceroys. Here it may be noted that the word *rāshṭṛiya* also denotes 'a king's brother-in-law' in its technical sense. But Kielhorn's suggestion[6] that as a title of Vaiśya Pushyagupta this word has to be taken in its etymological sense (*rāshṭrē adhikṛita*) of 'ruler of a province or district' is quite convincing.

Under the Viceroys were a number of officers of different grades entrusted with different responsibilities. Though the inscriptions mention the names, and to a certain extent, the functions of a number of officers, it is not easy to work out a clear picture of the administrative system. Thus, for example, the protocol and coordination that existed between one class of officers and that of another cannot be ascertained in all cases.

A class of officials called *Prādeśikas* figure in R.E. III. Here they are mentioned along with two other classes of officials called *Yuktas* and *Rājūkas*. *Prādeśika* was obviously the governor of a *pradēśa* or province. This official is identified with *Pradēshṭṛi* of the *Arthaśāstra* by Thomas[7]. The *Pradēshṭṛi* in *Arthaśāstra* is entrusted with the duties of collection of taxes, administration of criminal justice, tracking of thieves and checking superintendents and their men[8]. Inscriptions do not say anything about the status and responsibilities of the *Prādeśikas*. What all we come to know from them is the fact that, along with the *Yuktas* and *Rājūkas* they too were ordered by the emperor to set out every five years on a circuit for inspection throughout their charges, both for their normal duties and for the special purpose of preaching *Dharma*.

The *Rājūkas* figure in R.E. III and P.E. IV and VII. From quotations in the *Kurudhamma-Jātaka*, Bühler[9] has shown that *Rājūka* corresponded to *Rajjuka* or *Rajjugrāhaka* as he is therein more fully called. His duty, as described in the *Jātaka*, seems to have been that of measuring land by means of a cord (*rajju*) and fixing its boundaries. As he is styled *amachcha* it seems that he was a big officer, corresponding perhaps to the modern Revenue Settlement Officer. That he was an officer of a very high grade is also shown by the powers and privileges invested in this office as detailed in P.E. IV and VII. An analysis of the contents of these inscriptions gives us a vivid idea of the duties and responsibilities of the *Rājūkas*. First of all, the very fact that they were appointed to serve as administrators over hundreds of thousands of people speaks of their high status. It was left to the discretion of these officers either to honur or punish the subjects so that they might rule over the people fearlessly and impartially and look after the latter's welfare. Further, *Rājūkas* were advised to be impartial in legal procedures and in giving punishments. P.E. VII enlists a number of public utility measures, such as planting of trees on the roadsides, excavation of wells, construction of rest-houses, etc., which were to be carried out by the *Rājūkas*. And we have already noted that *Rājūkas* were to go out every five years on a circuit for inspecting the works under their regular charge and also for preaching *Dharma*. Thus, it is evident that the *Rājūkas* were officials of a very high rank holding both civil and judicial powers. But, inspite of their high rank and great responsibilities, they were to obey the *Purushas*, another class of high officials, obviously higher in rank than the former, who knew the wishes of the emperor. However, there is no doubt that the *Rājūkas* were entirely responsible for the material and moral upliftment of the people. For, in P.E. IV Aśoka states that just as a man, after having entrusted his child to a skilled nurse, seems assured with the thought : "The skilled nurse will be able to keep

my child well", even so the *Rājūkas* were created by him for the good and happiness of the country people.

The next class of officials was that of the *Yuktas*. Thomas[10] takes the term *yukta* occurring in R.E. III to mean a subordinate official in general. But Bhandarkar[11] and Dikshitar[12] rightly interpret this term on the basis of the *Arthaśāstra* and explain that the *Yuktas* were the officials responsible for maintaining accounts of receipt and expenditure. The duties of the *Yuktas* according to R.E. III were two fold. Firstly, they had to go on tours like the *Rājūkas* and *Prādeśikas*. From the position assigned to these officials, it seems that they accompanied their superior officials on tour. Secondly, they were in-charge of all the revenue and property of the king.

Another class of important officials was that of the *Mahāmātras*. There seems to be some difference of opinion among the scholars regarding the status of this class of officials. Thomas[13] explains the term *mahāmātra* as *mahatī mātrā yasya* and takes it to mean 'official' or 'dignitary' in general, on the basis of the occurrence of the term in similar contexts in the *Arthaśāstra* and in Pāli literature. Dikshitar[14] equates the term *mahāmātra* of the inscriptions with that of the *adhyaksha* in the *Arthaśāstra*, and states : "Whenever the term is used without any prefix it may be generally taken to denote ministers." According to Sircar[15] *Mahāmātras* were the highest class of officers in the Aśokan administration, employed in various capacities. Mookerji[16] holds that *Mahāmātras* were probably heads of special departments. Bhandarkar,[17] while discussing the provincial government under Aśoka, states that the province of Tōsalī was placed under the joint rule of *Kumāra-Mahāmātras*. Thus, it becomes difficult to ascertain the status of the *Mahāmātras* which varied from a joint ruler of a province to that of an officer in charge of matters concerning women (*Itthjhaka-Mahāmātra*). From the foregoing we may safely conclude that the *Mahāmātras* were ministers (when mentioned without a prefix as explained by Dikshitar) or high officials who bore various designations according to the nature of their duties.

As many as three different *Mahāmātras* are met with in the inscriptions besides the *Mahāmātras* in general. We may discuss the functions of each of them in their alphabetical order.

Some scholars[18] hold that *Antamahāmātras* of the inscriptions correspond to the *Antapālas* of the *Arthaśāstra*, and that they were in charge of the frontier provinces of Aśoka's empire. They have been mentioned in P.E.I. The context in which the *Antamahāmātras* are mentioned in this inscription does not warrant such an interpretation. On the contrary, it indicates that they were officials sent to the neighbouring states and charged with the task of carrying out Aśoka's programme of *Dharma*. This has been rightly pointed out by Bhandarkar[19], who draws our attention to the fact that, in Aśokan inscriptions whenever the word *anta* occurs, it has the sense of either 'a bordering king' or 'people of a bordering kingdom'. Thus, the

Antamahāmātras were the officers in charge of propagating *Dharma* among the people of the bordering kingdoms.

Dharmamahāmātras are comparable with the *Dharmāvasathins* of the *Arthaśāstra*, where they are defined as mangers of religious and charitable institutions entrusted with other religious duties. *Dharmamahāmātras* figure in R.E.V and XII and P.E. VII. According to R.E.V.[20] formerly there were no officers called *Dharmamahāmātras*. So Aśoka created the posts of *Dharmamahāmātras* thirteen years after his coronation. These officers were occupied with all the religious sects for the establishment of *Dharma* and for the promotion of *Dharma* as well as for the welfare and happiness of those who were devoted to *Dharma* even among Yavanas and other people dwelling about the western borders of his dominion. This and the two other inscriptions referred to above describe in detail the functions of the *Dharmamahāmātras*. They were concerned with people of different religions such as the Buddhists, Brāhmaṇas, Ājivikas, Nirgranthas, and with different professionals such as servile class, traders and agriculturists. They were occupied with the ascetics, householders and the ruling class including the relatives of the king. One of their functions was to look after the welfare of the prisoners. The fact that this class of officials was specially introduced by Aśoka for the propagation of *Dharma*, and the vast field of their multifarious activities indicate their status and the high honour in which they were held.

Ithijhakamahāmātras or Stry-adhyaksha-mahāmātras figuring in R.E. XII were officers in charge of matters concerning women. These officers are compared to the *Gaṇikādhyakshas* of the *Arthaśāstra* by Dikshitar[21]. This comparison cannot be rejected because womenfolk also included *gaṇikās* or the courtesans. But it is quite probable that Aśoka might have established a department for the welfare of the womenfolk in general and that it was headed by *Stry-adhyaksha-mahāmātra*.

Yet another class of officers are the *Nagaravyavahārikas* mentioned in the Separate Kaliṅga Edict I. They are equated with the *Pauravyavahārikas* of the *Arthaśāstra*. The texts of the two versions of the Separate Kaliṅga Edict I, wherein the two cities of Tōsalī and Samāpā are mentioned as the headquarters of these officers, indicate that the *Nagaravyavahārikas* were the administrators of justice for district towns. The same inscription also states that these officials were appointed over many thousands of people. We have already seen that *Rājūkas*, one of whose duties was to impart justice to people, were appointed over hundreds of thousands of people. Thus, it becomes evident that the *Nagaravyavahārikas* were judges inferior in rank to that of *Rājūkas*.

Prativēdakas mentioned in R.E. VI are equated to the *Chāras* of the *Arthaśāstra*. They were the reporters of the king. It is clear from the text of R.E. VI that the secret service was not very efficient for some time either before or in the early years of the reign of Aśoka. He made it sound and more useful by issuing clear instructions as detailed in this inscription. The *Prativēdakas* were to report the affairs of the people to the king at

any time and place whether the latter was engaged in eating or was in the harem, whether in station or on tour. Further, it was the duty of these officers to report immediately to the king if there was any controversy among the ministers of the council (*parishat*) on any issue[22]. Thus, it seems that the king kept himself informed of the activities of the council of ministers, other high officials and the general public through the *Prativēdakas*.

Purushas figuring in P.E. I, IV and VII have been equated with the *Gūḍhapurushas* of the *Arthaśāstra* by Hultzsch[23]. But this equation is not warranted by the inscriptions. Firstly, because the duties of secret services were assigned to the *Prativēdakas*, who were not entrusted with any other responsibilities. And, secondly, it is stated in P.E. I that the *Purushas* along with the *Antamahāmātras* were to enforce the proper practice of the religious instructions of the king. Therefore, we have to take the *Purushas* as civil servants in general. According to P.E. I there were three grades of this class of officials, *viz.*, the higher (*ukasa*), the lower (*gevaya*) and the middle (*majḥima*). The specific nature of the duties of *Purushas* cannot be ascertained from inscriptions. As regards their status, we have already noted that there were three different grades among them, the highest of which was superior to that of the *Rājūka*, who in P.E. IV is advised to obey the *Purusha* who knew the wishes of the king.

The functions of the *Vrajabhūmikas* figuring in R.E. XII are not clear. Sircar[24], following Bhandarkar[25], takes *Vrajabhūmikas* as Superintendents of cowpens or officers in-charge of royal cattle and pasture lands. This definition is based on the first part of this official designation, *viz.*, *Vraja*, which is taken in the sense of herds of cows and buffaloes, etc.

Both R.E. III and VI refer to *Parishat* or Council of Ministers. While discussing the functions of the *Prativēdakas* as detailed in R.E. VI, we have noted that any controversy arising among the ministers, obviously on matters of administration, was to be immediately reported to the king. This clearly indicates that the *Parishat* referred to in this context was the Council of Ministers that functioned directly under the king. In other words, it was the Central Ministry. We have already noted that the Province of Tōsali was placed under the joint rule of *Kumāra-Mahāmātras* and that the term '*mahāmatra*' means 'minister' when it is unprefixed. Thus, it is convincing to hold that both the king, stationed at Pāṭaliputra, which was the capital of the empire as indicated by the expression *iha* in R.E. VI, and by the mention of the city in the Sārnāth Edict, and the Viceroys, in charge of the different provinces of the empire, had their own Councils of Ministers.

Administration in the post-Mauryan period

After the fall of the Mauryan dynasty the Indian political scene witnessed emergence of new forces, both Indian and foreign. A number of petty political units replaced the

strong central power that was the Mauryan empire. Thus, from 200 B.C. to 300 A.D., the intervening period between the fall of the first Magadhan empire and the rise of the second Magadhan empire, the Śaka-Pahlavas, king Khāravela and the Kushāṇas ruled in different parts of North India in different periods. It was one long chapter of fierce warfare between the foreign powers stationed in India and the Indian rulers. Invasions and forcible intrusions from outside, and general insurrections became the order of the day. In fact, it was a period of confusion.

Inscriptions provide very little information on the administrative system adopted by the many states that flourished during this period. However, it is not difficult to draw the rough outlines of the contemporary administrative system with the help of a few isolated references to the subject, found in the epigraphs of the period and also by bringing in the non-epigraphical sources wherever necessary.

Of the Śuṅgas who were the immediate successors of the Mauryas and who ruled approximately between 187 B.C. to 75 B.C., we have only two inscriptions *viz.*, the Bhārhut Buddhist pillar inscription[26] and the Ayōdhyā inscription[27] of Dhana[dēva], the first one belonging to the first century B.C., and the second one, to the first century A.D. Of these two records, the first one merely refers to the reign of the Śuṅgas, obviously of a later Śuṅga king[28]. But the second record has a bearing on the administration of the Śuṅgas. It mentions Dhana[dēva] who is described as *Kōsalādhipa* and as the sixth (may be brother or son) of *Sēnāpati* Pushyamitra, the performer of two horse sacrifices. From the epithet *Kōsalādhipa* of Dhana[dēva] and the respectful reference to Pushyamitra, it seems that the former was the ruler of Kōsala under the Śuṅgas. From the *Mālavikāgnimitram* of Kālidāsa we come to know that Vidiśā was governed by prince Agnimitra, son of Pushyamitra, probably as his father's Viceroy (*Gōptṛi*)[29]. These two evidences together tend to show that Pushyamitra followed the practice of appointing the members of the royal household as governors. Thus, it becomes evident that Pushyamitra had divided his dominions into a number of territorial units, two such units comprising the Kōsala region and the region around Vidiśā.

The same literary work just referred to mentions an *Amātya* of Agnimitra[30]. This official designation is also found in the Silharā cave inscription[31] of about the middle of the first century A.D. This record refers to Mūladeva as *Amacha* (*Amātya*) of a ruler, Sāmidata by name, also mentioned in another inscription[32] from the same place. Thus, it stands to reason that some sort of administrative pattern prevailed at provincial level.

Further, there is a reference to the official called *Rajuka* in an inscription[33] of the 2nd-3rd century B.C. from a *stūpa* at Sāñchi which records the gift of Utara, the *Rajuka*. We have already noted in connection with Aśoka's administration that *Rājūka* was a Revenue settlement officer.

To sum up, appointment of the members of royal household as provincial governors, and the presence of the *Amātyas* and *Rajukas* in the Śuṅga period clearly indicate that

the well-established administrative pattern of the Mauryas was scrupulously followed by their immediate successors.

The history of the Indo-Greeks, the Śakas and Pahlavas, who ruled in different parts of North India before the emergence of the Kushāṇas to power, in the first century A.D., is better known from their coins rather than epigraphs. However, it is worthwhile to notice the epigraphical data pertaining to the administrative system of this period and corroborate them with the numismatic evidences wherever possible.

The Indo-Greek rulers introduced certain features of the Seleucid administrative system of western Asia. One such feature is the assumption of high sounding titles by the rulers. Thus, in the Sinkhot Steatite Casket inscriptions[34] of the time of Menander and Vijayamitra, the former is styled as *Mahārāja* and the latter as *Apracharāja*. The title *Apracharāja* has been rendered as 'he who has no king as his adversary' by Majumdar[35]. The Indo-Greek coins furnish us with a number of titles like *Nikator* (*Jayadhana*), *Anikatos* (*Apadhihata*), etc., and Menander is known to have had the title of *Soter* (Trātā)[36]. We have evidences to show that the Greek dominions in India were organised into administrative units of different sizes. In the Swat Vase inscription[37] Theodoros is styled *Meridarkha*. The title *Meridarkha* is explained as the same as the Greek *Meridarkhes* and as denoting 'a District officer' by Sircar.[38] Another such official designation is mentioned on some Billon coins of Gondophernes and Aśpavarman.[39] Here Aśpavarman is styled as *Stratega*. Commenting on this term Sircar[40] observes that *stratega* is the equivalent of Greek *strategos* which means in Sanskrit *sēnāpati*. He further states : "Aśpavarman was ruling in the N.W.F.P. region as a Viceroy of Gondophernes. He was previously ruling the same area as a subordinate of Azes II. This is indicated by coins bearing the name of Azes on the obverse and Aśpavarman on the reverse".

The administrative system of the Śaka-Pahlavas much resembles that of the Indo-Greeks. They too had high sounding titles like *Mahārāja*, *Rājarāja*, etc., as evidenced from their coins[41], and practised the Satrapal system of administration in the provinces, a proof of which is furnished by the Taxila copper-plate inscription[42] of Patika, dated in the year 78. This inscription informs us that under Maues ruled *Kshatrapa* Liaka Kusulaka and his son *Mahādānapati* Patika in the province of Chuksha. That Jihuṇika was the *Kshatrapa* of this very region is known from the Taxila silver vase inscription[43] dated in the year 191. The name of another *Kshatrapa* called Śivaseṇa of the town of Abhisāraprastha occurs in the legend of a copper seal ring[44] found by Bayley in Punjab.

The system of conjoint rule, that is, both a king and his son or a brother ruling jointly, mentioned in connection with the Indo-Greeks and the Śaka-Pahlavas by Chattopadhyay[45] is proved only by their coins.

The Kshatrapas of Mathurā and Western India adopted the higher epithet *Mahākshatrapa*, indicative of their improved status or independence. Thus, Nahapāna in the Junnār Cave inscription[46] of year 46, Rudradāman in the Junāgaḍh inscription[47] and

Chashṭana in the Gundā inscription[48] are all styled *Mahākshatrapa*. There are still a few more examples. Thus, in the Mathurā region, in the Mathurā Lion-Capital inscriptions[49], Rājūla is called *Mahākshatrapa* and Śoḍāsa is given the same epithet in another Mathurā inscription[50].

Both inscriptions and coins of these rulers furnish evidence for the prevalence of the conjoint rule referred to above. Sircar, commenting on the Andhau inscription[51], states : ".... But the wording shows beyond doubt that the year (of the Andhau inscription) should be referred to the reign of both Chashṭana and Rudradāman. Possibly at this stage Chashṭana was styled *Mahākskatrapa* and Rudradāman *Kshatrapa*. The coins of this family prove that a *Mahākshatrapa* and a *Kshatrapa* ruled at the same time somewhat like a *Mahārāja* and his *Yuvarāja* ..." He holds the same view with reference to *Mahākshatrapa* Rājūla and his son *Kshatrapa* Śoḍāsa figuring in the Mathurā Lion-Capital inscriptions just referred to.[52] In this connection Puri's statement that "The Śaka Chiefs not being able to agree about the election introduced a new form of government with more than one *Mahākshatrapa* at the head and with *Kshatrapas* in minor charges"[53] seems to be unwarranted, because these inscriptions mention, besides *Mahākshatrapa*, two *Kshatrapas*, a *Yuvarāja* and a *Kumāra*, all of whom could not have ruled over one and the same administrative unit. These inscriptions resemble, in their nature, the medieval Jaina inscriptions, which give a list of all the members present on the occasion of the making of a pious gift.

A noteworthy feature of the administrative system of the Kshatrapas of Mathurā and Western India is the adoption of the Indian titles and designations which is witnessed in their inscriptions and culminates in the Junāgaḍh inscription of Rudradāman mentioned earlier. Thus, the terms *agramahishī*, *yuvarāja* and *kumāra* occur in the Mathurā Lion-Capital inscriptions referred to above. Śoḍāsa is styled *Svāmin* in his inscriptions[54] from Mathurā. Nahapāna is invariably styled *Rājan* in the Nāsik Cave inscriptions[55]. The same title appears before the names of Chashṭana and Rudradāman in the Andhau inscriptions and the Junāgaḍh inscription[56].

The Junāgaḍh inscription just referred to furnishes very valuable information about the administrative system of the Kshatrapas of Western India. As for the official designations, it mentions *Amātya*, *Vishayapati*, *Matisachiva* and *Karmasachiva*. The expression *amātyaguṇa* occurs in l.17, and Suviśākha, who caused repairs to the Sudarśana lake, is termed *Amātya*. This term is well known from the time of the Mauryas. Since Suviśākha, who was appointed by the king to govern the regions of Ānarta and Surāshṭra (*Ānarta Surāshṭrānāṁ pālan-ārthan-niyuktēna*, Text, l.18), is styled merely as *Amātya*, and no designation of an administrative unit head such as *Uparika* is associated with his name, it is evident that the term *Amātya* in this particular case denotes the administrative head of a territorial unit probably larger than a *Vishaya*. *Vishayapati* was the head of a *Vishaya*. Sircar[57] compares the *Matisachiva* with *Dhisachiva* of the *Amara* and translates it as a counsellor, and *Karmasachiva* as an executive officer

Here we may also refer to the Gundā inscription[58] of Rudrasiṁha mentioning *Sēnāpati* Rudrabhūti, son of *Sēnāpati* Bāpaka, and to the Kānākherā inscription[59] of Śaka Śrīdharavarman wherein he is styled *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka*, a general or a judge.

At this stage we may notice a few inscriptions relevant to the subject as stray items. A term *kālavāḷa* which is spelt as *kālavāḍa* elsewhere, occurs in two of the epigraphs[60] from Mathurā. These inscriptions are assignable to the pre-Kushāṇa period on palaeographical grounds. The first one has the expression *Poṭhayaśakasa Kālavāḷasa* and the second one *Māthuraka... lavāḷasa*. Here Poṭhayaśaka and Māthuraka are personal names and the term *kālavāḷa* is associated with them. From the context it appears that *kālavāḷa* denotes some dignitary or official. A variant of this term (*kalavaḍa*) also occurs in the inscriptions[61] on the first *stūpa* at Sāñchi. Thus, it appears that this title was well in vogue in the post-Mauryan period. It may be noted here that Tewari, in one of his forthcoming articles[62], while discussing the meaning of the term *kalvāla* occurring in an 8th-9th century inscription[63], takes note of this early occurrence of the term *kālavāḷa*. In his opinion all the titles like *Kalavāḷa*, *Kalyapāla* or *Kallavāla*, with their slight differences in spellings, are the same as *Kalvāla* of the inscription referred to above, and as circumstantially proved by it (*cf. Kalvālānām surāyām surāyām*, Text 1.9), denote the community of distillers. Distillery being an important industry in ancient India, it is not unlikely that some members of this community could have occupied responsible positions in the local administration. The Mathurā stone inscription[64] of Śōḍāsa has the term *gaṁjavara* which has been taken by Sircar[65] to be the same as Persian *Ganjwar*, meaning a treasurer or store-keeper. Lastly, the Gunji Rock inscription[66] of Kumāravaradatta of the first century A.D. informs that Bōdhadatta was an *Amātya* of the king and he held the offices of *Daṇḍanāyaka* and *Balādhikṛita*. Here the term *amātya* seems to denote a royal official in general. But what is noteworthy here is the fact that more than one offices could be simultaneously held by one and the same individual. The designation *Daṇḍanāyaka* in this case does not seem to mean a general. Otherwise it is difficult to explain how two different military ranks could be simultaneously held by one and the same individual. The various functions of the *Daṇḍanāyaka* are discussed in the sequel.

The inscriptions from the Kaliṅga region, belonging to the period under discussion, have very little to state on the subject of administration. It is rather disappointing that the Hāthigumphā inscription[67] of Khāravela, which describes the military career and the personal virtues of the king, should be silent about his administration. But his military achievements presuppose a well-organised administrative set up. In this record occur the terms *mahārāja*, *yuvarāja* (actually *yauvarājya*), and *paura* and *jānapada*. The chief queen of Khāravela is styled *Agramahishī* in the Mañchapurī Cave inscription[68]. One of the label inscriptions[69] of about the first century B.C. or A.D. from the caves at Udayagiri and Khaṇḍagiri mentions Sabhūti who was a *Nagara adkhadamsa*. This expression has been rendered by Lüders[70] and, following him, Banerji[71] as 'a town-judge'.

Of all the dynasties that ruled after the fall of the Mauryas and before the rise of the Imperial Guptas, the Kushāṇas occupy a pre-eminent position. Their period marks an important epoch in Indian history. For the first time after the fall of the Mauryas there was a vast empire which not only embraced nearly the whole of North India, but also considerable territories outside it, as far as Central Asia. As in the case of the Indo-Greeks, and the Śaka-Pahlavas, the Kushāṇa inscriptions form only a part of the sources for their history, but they yield more information than the inscriptions of the other two dynasties.

The Kushāṇas had high sounding titles like *Mahārāja*, *Rājātirāja*, *Kushāṇaputra Shāhi* and *Kaisara* (an imperial Roman title), *Dēvaputra*, etc., which not only indicate the supreme power wielded by these rulers but the last of which also indicates their belief in the divine origin of kingship. These titles are found in their inscriptions, in combinations of two, three or even more. Occasionally they are also found singly.

Similar titles and titles of an even higher degree are also met with on the coins of the Kushāṇas. Chattopadhyay[72] has discussed each of these titles in detail. He explains how the Kushāṇa rulers deliberately adopted different measures to deify the kings. He mentions two Kushāṇa inscriptions[73], one recording the construction of a *Dēvakula* and the other referring to the repair of a *Dēvakula*. He equates the *Dēvakulas* occurring in these inscriptions with the royal portrait gallery for the deceased kings, figuring in the *Pratimānāṭaka* of Bhāsa.[74] Sircar[75], referring to a Mathurā inscription of Huvishka, observes : "An interesting reference in this record is to Huviskha's *Pitāmaha-devakula* which may indicate 'a royal gallery of portrait-statues' containing a statue of Huvishka's grand father." Altekar[76] also states : "The title *dēvaputra* shows how the theory of divinity of the king was making a rapid progress under the Kushāṇa auspices; the emperors of this dynasty started building temples at Mathurā in honour of their dead predecessors, following the Roman practice on the bank of the Tiber."

The high sounding titles and references to *Dēvakulas* together with the non-reference to counsellors in the Kushāṇa inscriptions clearly indicate the establishment of total monarchy in the Kushāṇa state with supreme power vested in the king.

The system of joint rule already referred to in connection with the Indo-Greeks and the Śaka-Pahlavas also seems to have prevailed under the Kushāṇas. A careful study of the dates of the Kushāṇa inscriptions reveals the overlapping of the reigns of two kings. To know this point it is necessary to note the chronology of these kings. Raychaudhuri[77] states : "Inscriptions discovered in India have preserved the names with dates of the following great Kushāṇa sovereigns besides the Kadphises group, *viz.*, Kanishka I (1-23), Vāsishka (24-28), Huvishka (28-60), Kanishka II, son of Vājheshka (41) and Vāsudeva (67-98)." *Rājan* Vāsishka appears in the Sāñchi inscription[78] of the year 22. This very king is found mentioned as *Mahārāja Rājātirāja Devaputra* Vāsishka in the Isāpur *yūpa* inscription[79] of the year 24. The evidence of these two epigraphs

indicates that Vāsishka was associated, in the capacity of a subordinate colleague, with Kanishka I in the years 22 and 23, after which the former was elevated to the position of the latter. As is at present known, the last date of Vāsishka is the year 28. But the year 28 is also found as the date of the earliest known record of Huvishka, *viz.*, the Mathurā inscription[80]. Here again the coincidence indicates the association of Huvishka with Vāsishka in the administration for a short period. Further, the Ārā stone inscription[81] of the year 41 shows the overlapping of the reigns of Huvishka and Kanishka II, son of Vājheshka. For, we have noted that the former ruled during the years 28-60. According to Chattopadhyay[82] the numismatic evidences also indicate that the joint rule system adopted by the Kushāṇas followed the system of joint rule practised by their predecessors. The adoption of the joint rule system also at the provincial level is attested to by the Sārnāth Buddhist image inscriptions[83] wherein figure the *Mahākshatrapa* Kharapallāna and *Kshatrapa* Vanaspara.

The Kushāṇas introduced for the first time two grades of high officials called *Daṇḍanāyaka* and *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka*. The Māṇikiāla inscription[84] mentions *Daṇḍanāyaka* Lala who is described as 'a scion of the Kushāṇa race' (*Guśaṇā-vaśa-samvardhaka*). *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* Hummiyaka figures in the Mathurā inscription[85] of the year 4. The Māṭ inscription[86] of the time of Huvishka refers to Bakanapati, son of a *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka*. And *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* Vālina is mentioned in the Mathurā inscription[87] of the time of Vāsudēva. The terms *daṇḍanāyaka* and *mahādaṇḍanāyaka* have been variously interpreted as designating military, judicial or police officials. Chattopadhyay[88] holds that these officials were entrusted with the task of establishing law and order in the conquered territory with the help of the army, in the Kushāṇa administration. Puri[89] suggests that the *Daṇḍanāyakas* were feudatory chiefs appointed by the king and holding allegiance to him, who were required to render civil and military aid.

Even in the matter of provincial government the Kushāṇas followed their predecessors. Under the Kushāṇas their provincial governors enjoyed the titles *Kshatrapa* and *Mahākshatrapa*. Some names of these officials met with in the inscriptions are *Kshatrapas* Liaka, Vēśpaśi[90], and Vanaspara[91], *Mahākshatrapa* Kharapallāna[92], etc. We have already referred to the system of joint rule in the provinces. It seems from the expressions *saha-kshatrapēna Vanasparēṇa-Kharapallānēna cha* in the first inscription and *mahākshatrapēna Kharapallānēna saha-kshatrapēṇa Vanasparēṇa* in the second one, both from Sārnāth[93], that in the first instance both these officials ruled jointly with equal status of Kshatrapa and afterwards Kharapallāna was promoted as *Mahākshatrapa* and Vanaspara continued to rule in the capacity of a *Kshatrapa*, of course, as a subordinate colleague. The non-mention of the *Kshatrapas* in the Set-Mahet inscription[94] of the time of Kanishka, recording the setting up of a Bōdhisattva image by Bala, leads Chatttopadhyay[95] to hold that the Kshatrapas under Kushāṇa kings had no independent or even semi-independent status.

As for the administrative divisions under the Kushāṇas, Chattopadhyay[96], commenting on the expression *sva-vishaya-bhukti-śāsana-yāchana* occurring in the Allahābād inscription[97]

with reference to Kushāṇas, states that the prevalence of *Bhukti* may have been a projection of Gupta administrative divisions into Kushāṇa times. This is true of not only *Bhukti* but also *Vishaya*. For, the Kushāṇa inscriptions never refer to these administrative units. Chattopadhyay[98] refers to the Sārnāth Buddhist image inscription[99] mentioning a *Vishayapati*. He seems to think that this record belongs to the post-Mauryan period. But Oertel[100] assigns it to the fifth century on palaeographical grounds.

In the Kushāṇa state *Grāmika* was in charge of the administration of a village. A Mathurā Jaina image inscription[101] of the year 40 records the dedication of the image by the wife of the village headman (*Grāmika*) Jayanāga whose father Jayadēva also enjoyed the same status. The Durā inscription[102] refers to a family of *Grāmikas*. Yet another Mathurā inscription[103] of the time of Vāsudēva records the setting up of an image by the wife of a village headman (*Grāmika*). The term *padrapāla* occurs in another record[104] of this period. The two designations *Grāmika* and *Padrapāla* seem to be synonymous. That these designations were in vogue, and the position of the village official was recognised in the Kushāṇa times is evidenced by the inscriptions mentioned just now. We have seen that both Jayadēva and his son Jayanāga of the Mathurā inscription referred to above were *Grāmikas*. And the expression *grāmikānām Atinam Rishṭhisheṇa sagotrāna* in the Durā inscription, also mentioned above, clearly refers to a family of *Grāmikas* belonging to the Rishṭhisheṇa gōtra. Thus, it can be safely held that the post of *Grāmika* was generally hereditary. We have no information on the functions of this office from the inscriptions.

The Māṇikiāla inscription referred to above mentions a term *navakarmiga* which denotes an official connected with the works of construction and repair of buildings.[105] This term also occurs in the Hidda inscription.[106]

We have already seen how the word *kālavāda*, meaning a distiller, denotes some dignitary or official in the pre-Kushāṇa period. This word occurs also in the Mōrā inscription[107] of Kanishka. But here the word occurs in its feminine form and denotes the wife of a *Kālavāda*. Lüders, commenting on this term, states : "*Māthuri kalavaḍā* probably means 'the wife of *kālavāda* of Mathurā', although the formation of the second word is unusual. In analogy to such derivations as *sārthavāhinī* from *sārthavāha*, we should expect rather *kālavādini*."

As pointed out by Lüders[108] the title *Viśvasaka* is found with slightly different spellings in several Mathurā inscriptions[109] of the Kushāṇa period. Thus, three inscriptions record gifts of the *Viśvasika* or *Viśvaśika* Vakamihira, and a fourth one,[110] a gift of *Viśvasika* Aśyala or Suśyala. It is noticed that the title is borne only by persons who by their names are shown to have been of foreign descent. Perhaps the correct form of this title is *Viśvāsika*. Sircar[111] also takes it as an official designation. A village official called *Viśvāsa* working together with the *Mahattara* who headed the village Administrative Board, occurs in a Gupta inscription.[112] Bhandarkar renders the term as 'an accountant'.

From the contexts in which this term occurs in the epigraphs of the Kushāna period it is difficult to cull out the functions of this official. But, from the fact that this title was borne by persons of foreign descent, it seems that *Viśvāsa* was an important official under the Kushāṇa rulers, probably connected with secret service, more so because the word means 'good faith'.

Lastly, a Brāhmi inscription[113] on a wooden pillar from Kirāri, datable to the second century A.D. on palaeographic grounds, mentions *Nagararakshins* (city-guards or police-inspectors); *Senāpati* (commander of army); *Gaṇaka* (accountant); *Bhāṇḍāgārika* (store-keeper); *Hāthārōha* (=*hasty-ārōha*, the king's elephant-driver); *Aśvārōha* (horseman); *Rathika* (charioteer); *Mahānasika* (kitchen-officer), *Hathivaka* (=*hastipaka*, perhaps Superintendent of elephants); *Dhāvaka* (fore-runner); *Sugandhaka* (=*saugandhika*, officer in charge of perfumery); *Gōmandilika* (=*gōmāṇḍalika* or officer in charge of cows or cattle ?); *Yānaśālāyudhagharika* (officer in charge of carriage-shed and armoury); *Palavāthida(ka?)vā(pā)lika* (Inspector of meat-stalls); *Lēhahāraka* (*lēkhahāraka*, letter carrier) and *Mahāsēnāni*. Sastri[114] states : "It is interesting to observe here in passing that these designations do not fail to remind us of the several functionaries like *Aśvādhyaksha, Hastyadhyaksha, Rathādhyaksha* mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya."

Gupta Administration

Though the Allahābād inscription[115] of Samudragupta gives a long list of kings conquered by him, practically only the whole of Uttar Pradesh, a part of Central India and the south-western part of Bengal fell within his empire proper. This we known from the names of the rulers of the five kingdoms on the frontier, and of the nine tribal states who 'paid taxes, obeyed orders and performed obeisance in person to the great emperor', all mentioned in the inscription referred to above. Chandragupta Vikramāditya extended the empire by conquering Mālava, Gujarat and Saurāshṭra, the territories of the Śaka chiefs, as can be known from his Udayagiri Cave inscription,[116] and coins struck by him and found in the erstwhile Śaka territories. To govern such a vast empire, though not as big as that of the Mauryas, a well organized administrative set up was a must.

Before going into the details of the administration of the provinces etc., it is worthwhile to discuss the terms denoting official designations occurring in the Gupta inscriptions. We begin this discussion with the term *kumārāmātya*, often met with in the Gupta inscriptions. This term has been tentatively taken to mean an *'Amātya* enjoying the status of a *Kumāra'*.[117] But, an examination of the various contexts in which this term occurs in the inscriptions will convince us that such a simple definition cannot explain the full significance of the term. From the legends on the seals[118] found at Basādh we come to know that the officer designated *Kumārāmātya* could be attached to the king (*Śri-Paramabhaṭṭārakapādtya-Kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇa*)[119], to the crown prince (*Śri-Yuvarāja-pādnya-Kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇa*)[120] or to the Revenue Division (*Tira-Kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇa*)[121]. *Kumārāmātya* thus seems to have been a big officer. It is to be noted that,

in all the legends quoted above, the *Kumārāmatya* is invariably associated with the term *adhikaraṇa*, meaning 'office'. So it becomes evident that *Kumārāmātya* had an office of his own wheresoever he was posted. Altekar[122] defines the *Kumārāmātyas* as 'members of a superior civil service, corresponding to the I.C.S. and I.A.S. of the modern times'. Inscriptions illustrate the various positions to which the *Kumārāmātyas* were posted. Harishēṇa, the foreign minister of Samudragupta, and Śikharasvāmin and Prithivishēṇa, the ministers of Kumāragupta I, were working directly under their emperors, and were described as *Kumārāmātyas*. Besides, District officers in Puṇḍravardhana were styled as *Kumārāmātyas*. Sometimes the *Kumārāmātyas* are seen to be serving as the subordinates of *Mahādaṇḍanāyakas* also.

The next designation we have now to discuss is that of *Uparika*. At Basādh itself has been found a seal[123] bearing the legend *Tirabhukty-Uparikādhikaraṇasya*. The Dāmōdarpur copper-plate inscriptions speak of *Puṇḍravardhana-bhuktāv-Uparika*. We may further note that, according to these plates, during the reign of Kumāragupta I, in the years 124[124] and 128[125] Chirātadatta was the *Uparika* of Puṇḍravarddhana and he was appointed to that post by the emperor (*tatpāda-parigṛihitē Puṇḍravarddhanabhuktād(v)-Uparika*). Similarly in the Gupta year 163[126] *Mahārāja* Brahmadatta was appointed by Budhagupta as the *Uparika* of Puṇḍravardhana. Here too the same expression *tatpāda* etc. occurs. There are one or two more such examples found in the Dāmōdarpur copper-plates[127]. These examples clearly show that Puṇḍravardhana in the Gupta period was a province (*bhukti*) and *Uparika* was its ruler, and he was appointed by the sovereign himself. Thus, the designation *Uparika* denotes the Viceroy of a province. The Dāmōdarpur copper-plate of the Gupta year 224[128] describes the *Uparika* of Puṇḍravardhana (name lost) as running the administration enjoying all the perquisites of a king such as elephants, horses and soldiers (*hasty-aśva-jan-ābhōga*), which indicates the high status of the office of *Uparika* in the Gupta administration.

The next designation to be discussed is that of *Vishayapati*. *Vishaya* was the smaller territorial division, next to *Bhukti*. This is known from the fact that Kōṭivarsha is mentioned in the Dārmōdarpur copper-plates as a *Vishaya* forming part of the Puṇḍravardhana *Bhukti*. However, these plates are silent about the appointment of *Vishayapati*. But the Indōr plate[129] of Skandagupta mentions a *Vishayapati* called Śarvanāga ruling over Antarvēdi and speaks of him as *tatpāda-parigṛihīta*, "being favoured by that venerable (king)", that is Skandagupta. This very expression is met with in the Dāmōdarpur records with reference to the *Uparika*, who, as has been shown already, was appointed by the sovereign himself. Thus, the Indōr plate may be taken to indicate that even the *Vishayapati* was appointed by the sovereign.

Before proceeding to discuss a few more designations we may note that the terms *lōkapāla*, occurring in the Eraṇ inscription[130] of Budhagupta (*Kālindi-Narmmadayōr-madhyam pālayati lōkapāla-gunair=jjagati ...*) and *gōptṛi*, occurring in the Junāgadh inscription[131] of Skandagupta (*sarvēshu-dēśēshu vidhāya gōptṛin*), have been used in their

literal sense of protector or ruler and not as designations, because the contexts in which they occur do not impart any technical sense to them.

The term *daṇḍanāyaka* occurring in the Gupta inscriptions has been variously interpreted by scholars, as 'leader of the forces', 'Judge', 'Chief Officer of Police', etc. But Bhandarkar,[132] after discussing in detail this term occurring in the Gupta inscriptions, and substantiating his arguments on the basis of the occurrence of the term in the South Indian inscriptions and in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, convincingly interprets it as a title of nobility comparable with that of *Mansabdar* of the Mughal period. He rules out the possibility of defining this term as 'a general', because there were a number of other terms of distinctively military character, such as *Mahāśvapati*,[133] meaning Commander of Cavalry, *Bhaṭāśvapati*,[134] Commander of Infantry and Cavalry, Sēnāpati,[135] meaning Commander-in-Chief, *Balādhikaraṇa*,[136] etc., which specified the nature of the responsibilities held by these officials. This explanation does not or need not preclude any military service on the part of a *Daṇḍanāyaka*. In this connection Puri[137] observes : "the *Daṇḍanāyakas* were probably feudatories of different gradations who were required to render service to the state which could be civil or military".

The term *Sāndhivigrahika* occurs for the first time in the Gupta inscriptions and has been rendered as minister for peace and war.[138] It is obvious that the *Sāndhivaigrahika* was connected with correspondence with foreign states in matters of *sandhi* (treaties of peace or alliance) and *vigraha* (hostility). Therefore, it was in the fitness of things that he himself and his subordinate officials were experts in the art of composition and mode of drafting. That this was the actual case is proved by the Udayagiri Cave inscription,[139] wherein Virasēna Śāba, the *Sāndhivigrahika* of Chandragupta II, is described as a *kavi* or poet (*śabd-ārtha-nyāya-lōkajñāḥ-kaviḥ*, Text, l.4), and by the Allahābād *praśasti* described as *kāvya*, composed by Harishēna who was the *Sāndhivigrahika* of Samudragupta.

The Dēō-Baranārk inscription[140] of Jivitagupta II mentions three terms, *viz.*, *dāṇḍika*, *chaurōddharaṇika* and *dāṇḍapāśika*. *Dāṇḍapāśika* also occurs in the legend of a Basāḍh seal.[141] The association of a rod (*daṇḍa*) with the term *dāṇḍika*, of a rod and a noose (*pāśa*) with *dāṇḍapāśika* and a thief (*chōra*) with *chaurōddharaṇika*, and the juxtaposition of these terms in the inscription mentioned above clearly indicate that these terms denote officials of the Police Department. On a comparison with such terms as *kaṇṭakōddharaṇa*, *śalyōddharaṇa*, etc., the function of a *Chaurōddharaṇa* can be inferred as that of keeping off thieves. Likewise, the two other officials, it seems, were entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining law and order within the area of their jurisdiction.

One of the Basāḍh seals[142] has the legend *Mahāpratīhāra-Taravara-Vinayaśūrasya*. Bhandarkar[143] explains the term *taravara* of this legend, which is of rare occurrence in the Gupta records, as a title of nobility. His interpretation is based on the occurrence of the feminine form of this term, *viz.*, *Mahātalavarī* in the inscriptions of a slightly earlier period found at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa.[144] We may also note that the primary meaning of both

the words *tara* and *vara*, which constitute the term *taravara* is 'excellent' or 'superior', which fits well into the present context. The term *mahāpratīhāra* denotes an official designation, which has been differently interpreted by scholars. On the basis of the sense of the word *pratīhāra* in Sanskrit, we may safely take the designation *Mahāpratīhāra* to mean 'a door keeper of a high rank'.

One of the seal legends from Basāḍh[145] reads : *Tribhuktau-Vinayasthiti-sthāpak-ādhikaraṇasya*. Here we have another officer called *Vinayasthitisthāpaka*, who had his own *adhikaraṇa* or office. Bhandarkar[146] aptly renders this designation as standing for "the official who maintains moral (*vinaya*) and social discipline (*sthiti*)." Though we are not certain as to how this officer carried out his functions, he reminds us of the *Dharmamahāmātras* of the Mauryan administration.

We come across the terms *āyuktaka* and *āyukta* in a Dāmōdarpur copper-plate[147] and the Allahābād pillar inscription[148] respectively. In the latter record the *Āyuktas* are mentioned as being "always engaged upon restoring wealth to the many kings conquered by the might of his arms" (*sva-bhuja-bala-vijit-ānēka-narapati-vibhava-pratyarppaṇānitya-vyāprit-āyukta-purushasya*, Text, l.26). A comparison of the term *āyukta* in the present context with what the term *yukta* denotes in the *Arthaśāstra* and Aśokan inscriptions leaves no doubt that the *Āyukta* or *Āyuktaka* of the Gupta records was a Treasury officer. For, we have already noted that *Yukta* was in charge of all revenues and property of the king in the Mauryan administration.

There are still a few more official designations which will be explained as and when the occasion arises. Now we may pass on to the pattern and mode of working of the government under the Gupta emperors.

That the king was the supreme head of the State, exercising both executive and military powers, is obvious from the fact that the Gupta monarchs personally led expeditions against their enemy kingdoms and themselves appointed provincial rulers, District officers and other high officials, as evidenced by the inscriptions.

Inscriptions do not furnish much information about the working of the Central Government under the Gupta kings. We do not know if at all a Council of Ministers existed. No doubt the term *parishad* occurs in the Bilsaḍ stone inscription[149] of Kumāragupta I, belonging to 415-16 A.D. In this record it is stated that the *Parishad* honoured one Dhruvaśarman (*parishadā mānitēna Dhruvaśarmmaṇā*, Text l.9). But there is a lacuna just before the word *parisḍhad* and it is not possible to ascertain what type of *Parishad* it was. Therefore, it cannot be taken to mean a *Mantri-parishad*. However, the terms *mantri* and *sachiva* are met with in the Gupta inscriptions. Thus, Śikharasvāmin is described as a counsellor (*mantri*) of Chandragupta II in the Karamḍāṇḍā inscription[150] of the Gupta year 117, and Virasēna Śāba, as a hereditary minister (*anvayaprāpta-sachiva*) of the same king in the undated Udayagiri Cave inscription.[151] But, in these instances it is to be noted that the terms *mantri* and *sachiva* are associated with the designations *Kumārāmtya* and *Sāndhivigrahika*.

In the absence of the mention of a regular Council of Ministers at the centre, the only way available for us is to look for the officials and dignitaries who were directly under the king enjoying his confidence and ran the Central administration. We have already seen that the *Kumarāmātyas* were high officials with establishments of their own, and that they could be entrusted with any kind of responsibility. So we may assume that a number of *Kumārāmātyas* were appointed to assist the king in his administration. We know from the Allahābād pillar inscription that its composer Harishēṇa was a *Sāndhivigrahika-Mahādaṇḍanāyaka-Kumārāmātya* and was the son of *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* Dhruvabhūti. The fact that Harishēṇa was a highly trusted officer of the emperor Samudragupta is evident from the expression *bhaṭṭārakapādānāṁ dāsyasamupa-parisarppaṇ=ānugrah=ōnmulita-matēḥ*, employed in his description. Thus, it becomes clear that *Sāndhivigrahika* and *Mahādaṇḍnāyaka* were two high ranking officials who shouldered the responsibilities of running the Central government. The same inscription mentions another officer called *Āyukta*, who was the Treasury Officer of the king. But it is doubtful if *Āyuktaka* Bhāṇḍaka of a Dāmōdarpur plate[152] worked directly under the king. For, he was the head of the District Town Administration of Kōṭivarsha. We have already discussed these designations in detail.

The empire was divided into a number of provinces (*bhuktis*) each placed under a provincial governor or Viceroy called *Uparika*. We know the names of only two *bhuktis* from the inscriptions. Thus, the Dāmōdarpur records[153] mention Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti and a Basāḍh seal[154] mentions Tīra-bhukti. We have already seen that the provincial governors were appointed by the king himself. The legend of the Basāḍh seal just referred to reads : *Tīrabhukty-Uparik-ādhikaraṇasya*. Here there is a reference to the office (*adhikaraṇa*) of the *Uparika*, whose status is further highlighted by the expression *hasty-aśva-janabhōga* occurring in the Dāmōdarpur record of the Gupta year 224, which we have already discussed. The *Uparika* was empowered to nominate heads of the *Adhiṣṭhān-ādhikaraṇa*, which is rendered as 'the District Town Board' by Bhandarkar.[155] Thus, we come to know from the Dāmōdarpur records that Chirātadatta who was the *Uparika* of Puṇḍravardhana in Gupta years 124 and 129, nominated *Kumārāmātya* Vētravarman as the head of the *Adhishṭhān-ādhikaraṇa* of Kōṭivarsha. Similarly, at a later date, *Mahārāja* Jayadatta, the *Uparika* of the same province nominated *Āyuktaka* Bhāṇḍaka as the head of the same *Adhisthān-ādhikaraṇa*, namely Kōṭivarsha. Another such instance is found in the plate of the Gupta year 224, which states that one Svayambhudēva, who was also a *Vishayapati*, was appointed as the head of Kōṭivarsha *Adhiṣṭhān-ādhikaraṇa* by the *Uparika* (name lost) of the same province referred to above.

We have already mentioned another officer of Tīra-bhukti. He is *Vinayasthitisthāpaka*. He had an independent office (*adhikaraṇa*). He seems to have been an important provincial officer, as he was responsible for maintaining moral and social discipline.

Now we pass on to the next territorial division called *Vishaya* which was a sub-division of the *Bhukti*, and placed under a *Vishayapati*. Names of some *Vishayas* and their

Vishayapatis are met with in the Gupta records. Thus, Kōṭivarsha-vishaya in the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti is well known from the Dāmōdarpur copper-plates, and Svayambhu and Vētravarman were the *Vishayapatis* of this District at different times. We have seen that Śarvanāga was the *Vishayapati* of Antarvēdī, the District surrounding Kanauj. In this case the word Antarvēdī is not associated with the term *vishaya*. But the expression *Vishayapati Śarvanāgasy-Āntarvvēdyām* ('in Antarvēdī of the *Vishayapati* Śarvanāga', Text, l.4) in the inscription clearly indicates that Antarvēdī was the name of a *Vishaya*. Bhandarkar[156] suggests that the *Vishaya* of Khādā(ṭa?)pāra, mentioned in the Dhanāidaha copper-plate inscription of Kumāragupta I, dated the Gupta year 113 was, like Kōṭivarsha, one of the many districts of the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti. Lastly, Basak[157], while commenting on the Baigrām copper-plate inscription of the Gupta year 128, states : "The name of the place whence the charter was issued was Pañchanagarī, possibly the district (*vishaya*) headquarters. The administrative officer, who was in charge of the district court (*Vishay-ādhikaraṇa*) ..... was named Kulavṛiddhi and had the title of *Kumārāmātya*." He further suggests that probably this *Vishaya* was included in the old Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti. We have already stated that the *Vishayapatis* were appointed by the king himself.

What the district sub-division in the Gupta period was, it is difficult to ascertain. The Nandapur plate[158] mentions the village Khaṭāpurāṇa as included in the Nanda–vīthi. *Vīthi* originally denotes 'a road', 'a row' or 'a market', but here it stands for a 'district sub-division'. And in this particular case probably the sub-division was called Nanda-vīthi after Nandapur, the provenance of the plate. The Pāhārpur copper-plate grant[159] of the Gupta year 159 refers to grant of land from various villages which are said to be contained in the Dakshiṇāṁśa-vīthi and the Nāgiraṭṭa-maṇḍala. Thus, *Vīthi* and *Maṇḍala* were the two sub-divisions of a *Vishaya*. Now the question arises : which of these terms, *vīthi* and *maṇḍala*, denotes a more extensive territory? Bhandarkar[160], on the basis of the context in which these terms, and the term *vishaya* occur, in the Pāla records, holds that the terms *vishaya* and *maṇḍala* were used synonymously and in the sense of a 'district' and *vīthi* in the sense of a 'sub-division'. But, it is doubtful if this was the case in the Gupta period. On the other hand, it is reasonable to propose that *Vīthi* was a more extensive territorial division than *Maṇḍala*. The relevant passage in the Pāhārpur grant reads : *Dakshiṇāṁśakā-vīthēya-Nāgiraṭṭa-māṇḍalika*, etc. (Text, l.1). Now if the order of succession, in which the terms *vīthi* and *maṇḍala* occur here, has any significance, it is not difficult to comprehend that *Vīthi* in this particular case denotes a territorial division larger than *Maṇḍala*. This view is substantiated by the fact that in the Guṇaighar inscription,[161] the name of the village is immediately preceded by that of the *Maṇḍala* (*Uttara-māṇḍalika-Kāntēḍḍaka-grāmē*, Text, l.7), which, therefore, seems to have been the basic territorial division. We do not come across the names of any of the officials of these smaller territorial divisions in the inscriptions.

The Dāmōdarpur copper-plate inscriptions throw light on the administration of the

District towns and that of villages in Bengal in the Gupta period. These records register the orders of the *Adhikaraṇa* of the Kōṭivarsha-Adhishṭhāna to certain village officials with regard to conveyance of certain lands. Since, as pointed out earlier, the term *adhikaraṇa* is associated with various types of officers, as in *Kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇa*, *Śri-raṇabhaṇḍāgār-ādhikaraṇa*, *Daṇḍapāś-ādhikaraṇa*, *Vinaysthiti-sthāpak-ādhikaraṇa*, etc., it becomes clear that this term denotes 'an office' in general not restricting its sense to 'a court of justice', which is its meaning as given in the lexicons. The term *adhishṭhāna* means 'a place', 'locality' or 'town.'[162] In the light of this explanation the expression *Kōṭivarsh–ādhishṭhān–ādhikaraṇa*, found on the only surviving seal of the Dāmōdarpur records, can be convincingly rendered as 'office of the Town of Kōṭivartsha'. We already know from the expression *Kōṭivarsha-vishaya* that *Kōṭivarsha* was a District Town. Thus, *Adhishṭhān-ādhikaraṇa* denotes District Town Board. Four of the Dāmōdarpur records mention the names of the members of this Board. Of these the earliest two records refer to the reign of Kumāragupta and are dated the Gupta year 124 and 128. Both these records mention the names of the members of the Board thus : *Nagaraśrēshṭhi* Dhṛitipāla, *Sārthavāha* Bandhumitra, *Prathamakulika* Dhṛitimitra and *Prathamakāyastha* Śāmbapāla. We have already seen that *Kumārāmātya* Vētravarman was the head or the president of this Board and that he was appointed by Chirātadatta, the *Uparika* of the Puṇḍravarddhana-bhukti which included the Kōṭivarsha-vishaya. Five members thus constituted this Board; in other words, it was verily a *pañchāyat*. The epithets of the four members just referred to, *viz.*, *Nagaraśrēshṭhi*, *Sārthavāha*, *Prathamakulika* and *Prathamakāyastha*, clearly indicate that they represented different classes of people in the society. Thus, the *Nagaraśrēshṭhi* represented the local trading community, *Sārthavāha*, the itinerant commercial class, *Prathamakulika*, the Zamindari class and *Prathamakāyastha* the class of the officers in charge of the collection of revenue.

The Dāmōdarpur records describe in detail the transaction pertaining to the sale of government lands to the public for religious purposes. To describe this sale procedure in brief, the purchaser had to submit an application to the District Town Board specifying the location, measurement, rate per unit of the land proposed for purchase and also the purpose for which the land was required. He had also to deposit with the government the price of the land along with the application. This application was referred to the Record Keepers (*Pustapālas*) who, having examined it, ascertained the truth of its contents and certified that there would be no objection from the *Vishayapati* for the transaction in question. Thereupon, the *Adhishṭhān-ādhikaraṇa* notified the sale of the particular land and issued a charter in that respect. Inscriptions do not refer to any other functions of the District Town Board. But certainly it would have had other functions too. For, it does not appear reasonable that such a Board, wherein all sections of society were represented, would attend only to the sale of government lands.

At this juncture it is worthwhile to say something about the *Pustapālas*. They were the record-keepers who had to maintain the documents pertaining to the government

lands and who were expected to know the prices per unit of the government land as prevailing in the District to which they were attached, because it was on their recommendations that the government lands were sold to the public. That they were attached to the District officer (*Vishay-ādhikaraṇa*) is evident from the expression *nō kāryō Vishayapatinā kaśchid=virōdhaḥ*, meaning 'no objection whatever can be raised by the *Vishayapati*', which forms part of their certificate in the Dāmōdarpur inscription[163] of Vishṇugupta, dated in the Gupta year 224. Another interesting point is that there were always more than one *Pustapālas* working together in the *Vishaya* of Kōṭivarsha, as known from all the Dāmōdarpur copper-plates with the exception of the one of Budhagupta. It is only in the Dāmōdarpur copper-plate of the Gupta year 224 that these officers are referred to as *Prathamapustapāla* (Chief of the Record-keepers).

Lastly, the Dāmōdarpur copper-plate inscriptions throw welcome light on the village administration. One of these[164] records has the following passage : *Palāśnavṛindakāt-sa-Viśvāsaṁ Mahattar-ādyashṭakul-ādhikaraṇaṁ grāmika-kuṭumbinaś=cha Chaṇḍa=grāmaka-brāhmaṇ-ādhyaksha-kshudra-prakṛiti-kuṭumbinaḥ=kuśalam=uktvā....* (Text, ll.2-3). In this passage we come across the persons who issued a certain order and those to whom it was issued. Here the word *Ashṭakul-ādhikaraṇa* is very important. On the analogy of the *Pañchakula*, Bhandarkar[165] interprets it as 'a Board with eight constituent members'. The expression *Ashṭakul-ādhikaraṇa* is here qualified by the phrase *Mahattar-ādi*, which means that the *Mahattara* was the head of the Board consisting of eight members. Further, the word *mahattara* is qualified by the phrase *sa-viśvāsaṁ*. In this context the term *viśvāsa* denotes an official designation. Thus, the *Mahattara* associated with *Viśvāsa* headed the village Administrative Board. According to Bhandarkar[166] *Mahattara* was an officer of a low rank connected with the collection of revenue and *Viśvāsa*, an Accountant. The other members of the Board were the *Grāmikas*, who were the village headmen. The Dhanāidaha inscription[167] of Kumāragupta I also refers to the *Ashṭakul-ādhikaraṇa* and the *Mahattara*; and, the *Grāmika* figures in the Supiā pillar inscription[168] of Skandagupta.

ADMINISTRATION IN THE POST-GUPTA PERIOD

(*i*) *Administration under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*

Of all the states that arose out of the ruins of the Gupta empire the kingdom of Valabhī proved to be the most durable. The descendants of Bhaṭārka, a Gupta general of the Maitraka clan and the governor of Saurāshṭra, gradually made themselves powerful towards the close of the fifth century A.D. The first two chiefs, Bhaṭārka and his son Dharasēna, called themselves *Sēnāpati*, but their successors styled themselves *Mahārāja* or *Mahāsāmanta Mahārāja*. The third king Drōṇasiṁha, the younger brother of Dharasēna, is said to have been invested with the rank and title of *Mahārāja* by his (Gupta) overlord, probably Budhagupta. From the epithet *Paramabhaṭṭāraka-pādānudhyāta* occurring in the grants[169] of Drōṇasiṁha and his successor *Mahārāja* Dhruvasēna, it becomes clear that

they had not yet finally thrown off the yoke of the Guptas. No record of *Mahārāja* Dharapaṭṭa, the younger brother and successor of Dharasēna, has yet been found. Dharapaṭṭa was succeeded by his son *Mahārāja* Guhasēna. It is only from the time of Guhasēna that the epithet *Paramabhaṭṭārakapādānudhyāta* disappears from the Maitraka grants[170]. This clearly indicates that Guhasēna was the first independent ruler of the Maitraka dynasty in true sense. The Maitraka dynasty lasted roughly from 475 A.D. to 775 A.D.

A number of copper-plate inscriptions of the Maitrakas of Valabhi so far discovered furnish a long list of officials which enables us to form an idea of the contemporary administrative set up. The following list of officials as found in the Mōṭā Māchhālā plates[171] of Dharasēna II includes most of the officials under the Maitraka administration. Here we have *Āyuktaka, Viniyuktaka, Drāṅgika, Mahattara, Chāṭa, Bhaṭa, Dhruvādhikaraṇika, Śaulkika, Vartmapāla, Pratisāraka, Rājasthānīya* and *Kumārāmātya*. It is doubtful if this list follows any ascendant or descendant order. For, here the mention of *chāṭa* and *bhaṭa*, which terms are taken to denote ordinary 'soliders'[172], is preceded and succeeded by the mention of designations indicative of high offices. From the other Maitraka records we also know of *Dāṇḍapāśika*[173], *Pratīhāra*[174], *Chaurōddharaṇika*[175], *Divirapati*[176], *Sāndhivigrahādhikṛita*[177], *Pramātṛi*[178], *Dūtaka*[179], *Dāṇḍabhōgika* (?)[180], *Anutpannādāna-samudgrāhaka*[181], *Daśāparādhika*[182], *Avalōkki*[183], *Bhōgadharaṇika*[184], *Vishayapati*[185], *Uparika*[186], *Rāshṭrapati*[187], *Grāmakūṭa*[188], *Balādhikṛita*[189], *Bhōgika*[190], *Mahākshapaṭalika*[191] and *Sūpakārapati*[192].

Since most of these designations are known from the Gupta records we shall discuss only the important ones and those which were newly introduced. Thus, the designations *Uparika, Vishayapati, Sāndhivigrahika, Balādhikṛita, Kumārāmātya, Āyuktaka, Mahattara, Pratīhāra, Dāṇḍapāśika* and *Chaurōddharaṇika* are all met with in the Gupta records. All these official designations of the Gupta administrative set up were obviously adopted by their junior contemporaries, the Maitrakas. Therefore, we can safely take them to denote the same sense as in the Gupta period. Besides, the Maitraka records do not specify the functions of these officials.

Among the chief royal functionaries of the Maitrakas were the *Rājasthānīyas*. They figure in most of the Maitraka grants. The juxtaposition of *Rājasthānīya* with *Kumārāmātya* suggests a very high position for the former, who has been generally taken to be a Viceroy.[193] But, since we are not aware of any Viceroy serving under the Maitrakas it is better to adopt the literal sense of the term, *viz.*, 'an officer acting for the king'. Another such official designation occurring in a grant of Śīlāditya III[194] is *Bhōgika*. The writer of this record *Divirapati* Haragana is stated to be the son of *Balādhikṛita* Bappa-bhōgika. Here the term *bhōgika* certainly stands for an official designation. As we know that *bhōga* was one of the taxes under the Maitraka revenue system,[195] the official designation *Bhōgika* can be taken to denote 'a tax officer'. Sircar[196] explains it as the owner of a *bhōga or jāgīr*. A similar designation occurring in a grant of Dharasēna II[197] is *Bhōgādharaṇika*. It may be a variant or a corrupt form of

Bhōgōddharaṇika, explained as the 'collector of the king's share of the grains.'[198] The two terms *bhōgika* and *bhōgādharaṇika* seem to be synonymous.

Almost all the Maitraka grants mention the names of the *Dūtakas* at the end. The high dignity of the post of *Dūtaka* can be known from the fact that no less persons than the princes of royal blood were appointed to this post. Thus, for instance, *Rājaputra* Kharagraha was the *Dūtaka* of the two Nogawa grants of Dhruvasēna II[199], and *Rājaputra* Dhruvasēna, that of the Jesar copper-plate grant of Śīlāditya II.[200] Besides these, other officials were also appointed as *Dūtakas*. *Dūtaka Pratīhāra* Mammaka is well known in the Maitraka grants. In another case *Pramātṛi* Nāga was the *Dūtaka*.[201] *Dūtaka* was a messenger, a conveyor of a royal request or message, or the accredited executor of royal grants. It seems that the post of *Dūtaka* was an additional charge of the *Rājaputras* and other officials. Had it been a regular post it would have found a place in the regular list of officials.

Sircar[202] explains *Drāṅgika* as 'an officer in charge of a city station or watch-tower for collection of customs duties'. But this does not seem to hold good in the case of the Maitraka records, because *Draṅga* therein denotes a territorial division including a number of villages. Three grants[203] of the Maitraka kings refer to villages belonging to the Maṇḍali-draṅga. Thus, for example, the Walā inscription of Guhasēna[204] refers to the two villages, Śamīpadravāṭaka and Saṅgamānaka as situated in the Maṇḍali-draṅga. Therefore, *Drāṅgika* was the officer in charge of the territorial sub- division called *Draṅga*. The two terms *chāṭa* and *bhaṭa* are variously interpreted by scholars.[205] We may take them to be soldiers in general.

Of the other officials of the Maitrakas *Āyuktaka* and *Viniyuktaka* are important. They occupy the first and the second places respectively in the list of officials found in the Maitraka grants. Of these two officials the *Āyuktaka* is known from the inscriptions of Aśoka and the Guptas, where he was an officer dealing with the state revenue. But it is doubtful if his functions continued to be the same in the Maitraka period. Sinha[206] holds that *Āyuktaka* was the officer of the village as he is mentioned along with *Mahattara, Drāṅgika*, etc. As the *Āyuktaka* and *Viniyuktaka* are found invariably associated, and as the two terms are much similar, we may presume that *Viniyuktaka* was the assistant of the *Āyuktaka*. It may be noted that, though the list of officials enumerated in Maitraka records does not appear to follow any order of precedence, *Āyuktaka* always precedes *Viniyuktaka*.

Divirapati was another important official in the administrative set up of the Maitrakas. The term *divira* has been explained as the same as Persian *Dabīr*, 'a clerk' and *divirapati* as the 'Chief Secretary' by Sircar[207]. In the Valabhi grants the designation *Divirapati* is always used as the title for the official who drew up the royal charters. At times the *Divirapati* held the charge of other offices also. Thus, the writer of the Navalakhi plates of Śīlāditya I[208] was the *Sāndhivigrahādhikṛita Divirapati* Vatrabhaṭṭi and of the Jesar plates[209] of Śīlāditya III, *Sāndhivigrahādhikṛita Divirapati Mahāpratīhāra Sāmanta* Mammaka. That the post of *Divirapati* was a hereditary one has been convincingly explained by

Diskalkar[210]. Another designation, *Mahākshapaṭalika* occurs in a grant of Śīlāditya VII.[211] Here the *Dūtaka* of the grant Siddhasēna also bears the titles of *Mahāpratihāra* and *Mahākshapaṭalika*. *Mahākshapaṭalika* has been explained as 'a record-keeper and accountant.'[212] Perhaps he was the counterpart of the *Pustapāla* of the Gupta administration. However, the designation *Akshapaṭalika* does not occur in the regular list of officials of the Maitraka rulers.

Dhruvādhikaraṇika is another official figuring in the Maitraka records. He is also called *Dhruvasthānādhikaraṇika*. Ghoshal[213] explains this term as designating an officer charged with supervision of revenue from farmers. Yet another revenue officer is *Śaulkika*, obviously in charge of collection of a tax called *śulka* which is explained as customs duties or octroi duties[214].

An official called *Anutpannādāna-samudgrāhaka* is mentioned in a grant of Guhasēna[215]. As the term itself indicates, he was an extractor or realiser of unpaid dues of whatever kind. Ghoshal[216] explains it as 'an officer charged with forcible collection of the so called voluntary gifts from the subjects'. Another official of this kind is *Daśāparādhika*, who was appointed to collect the fines imposed on persons found guilty of any of the ten offences[217].

The Mōtā Māchhāla plates[218] of Dharasēna II mention two officials called *Vartmapāla* and *Pratisāra*. The first of these officials is obviously connected with *vartman*, meaning 'a road'. Sircar[219] renders this term as a 'superintendent of roads'. *Pratisāraka* has been variously explained as 'an officer who collects taxes and allows carts to go out of the nāli', as a 'gate-keeper', etc.[220] Bühler[221] takes this term to mean 'watchman' in general. However, in the inscriptions themselves the duties of this official are not specified.

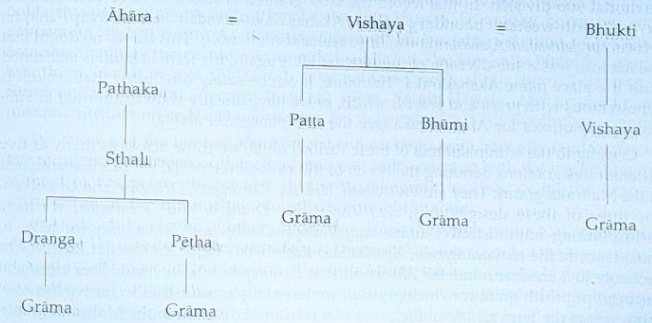
Pramātṛi occurs in the Kāpadvanaj grant[222] of Dhruvasēna III. It is obvious that this officer was concerned with some sort of measurements. Ghoshal[223] explains this term as 'an officer connected with the department of land survey', while according to Sinha,[224] he was a judicial official. Etymologically the word means, among other things, 'one who has a correct notion or idea', and is derived from the root *pramā* 'to measure', 'to mete out', etc.

An interesting official designation occurring in a grant of Dhruvasēna I[225] is *Sūpakārapati*. In this record the *Dūtaka* of the grant, Bhaṭṭi, is styled *Sūpakārapati*, which obviously means the 'Chief cook'. This reminds of the *Khādyakūtapākika* of the Allahābād pillar inscription of Samudragupta.[226]

Lastly, we come across the term *avalōkki* in a grant of Dharasēna II.[227] It occurs in the regular list of officials. It seems that this designation is connected with the term *avalōkya* which is rendered as 'detection' by Sircar[228]. Therefore, *Avalōkki* may mean 'a detective', 'an intelligence officer'.

We have discussed so far a number of official designations occurring in the records of the Maitraka rulers in a general way, that is to say, without specifying which of them belonged to the Central government and which to the provincial one. Such a classification, however, is difficult in the absence of specific references.

Now, we shall proceed to discuss the territorial divisions and their administration as can be gleaned from the Maitraka inscriptions. Maitraka grants mention a number of territorial sub-divisional suffixes indicative of administrative units, at the base of which were the lowest units of *Grāma, Padraka* and *Palli*. They are *Āhāra, Sthalī, Pathaka, Pēṭha, Vishaya, Paṭṭa, Bhūmi, Bhukti* and *Draṅga*. Of these, *Vishaya* and *Bhukti* seem to be synonymous, because Mālavaka is referred to as a *Vishaya* in one of the Maitraka records,[229] and as a *Bhukti* in another.[230] The *Āhāra* was also some times called *Āharaṇi* or *Haraṇi*. Then, the expression *Khēṭakāhāra-vishaya* of a grant of Dharasēna II[231] shows that the terms *āhāra* and *vishaya* were sometimes used synonymously as has been rightly pointed by Bühler.[232] Virji's argument[233] that "as the Hastavapr-āhāra, the Kaundinyapura-visaya and the Vardhamāna-bhukti formed the main divisions of Surāṣṭra the unit āhāra also seems to be synonymous with the vishaya and the bhukti" has been accepted by Sinha[234]. Thus, it seems that there was very little difference between the three territorial divisions, *Āhāra, Vishaya* and *Bhukti*. *Paṭṭa* and *Bhūmi* are mentioned as sub-divisions of the *Vishaya* in a grant of Dhruvasēna III[235] (*Śivabhāgapura-vishayē dakshinapaṭṭe Paṭṭapadragrāmaḥ*) and in a grant of Kharagraha II[236] (*Śivabhāgapura-vishayē Ghṛitalāya-bhūmau Pangulapallikā-grāmaḥ*) respectively. The *Pathaka* is represented as a sub-division of the *Āhāra* in a grant of Dharasēna IV[237] (*Khēṭak-āharē Simhapallikā-pathakē Dēsurakshitijja grāmaḥ*), while the unit *Pēṭha* was included in a *Sthalī*.[238] However, we do not find a direct reference to the exact position of the *Sthalī* in relation to the *Āhāra* and the *Pathaka*. Virji[239] holds that a *Sthalī* was included in a *Pathaka*. This is based on the fact that Jambuvānara is referred to as a *Sthalī* in one grant and simply as a village in the Kalāpaka-pathaka in another. Further, Virji[240] takes the smaller unit *Draṅga* to be a sub-division of the *Sthalī* and furnishes the following table to show the inter-relation between the various administrative units :



Besides these there are a few more terms occurring in the Maitraka grants, which seem to denote administrative units. Thus, in a grant of Dhruvasēna I,[241] the village Hariyānaka is said to have been situated in the Akshasaraka-prāpa of the Hastavapr-āharani (*Hastavapr-āharaṇyām-Akshasaraka-prāpya Hariyānakagrāmē*). Hence, it becomes evident that *Prāpa* was a sub-division of the *Āharaṇi*. Hultzsch[242] rightly takes these terms in this very sense. Similarly, in a grant of Dhruvasēna I[243] the village Vasukīya is styled as *Akshasaraka-prāvēśya*. In view of the fact that one and the same place-name, *viz.*, Akshasaraka is associated once with the term *prāpya* and again with *prāvēśya* in similar contexts, it is obvious that these two terms are synonymous and denote a sub-division immediately next to *Āhāra*. Sukthanakar[244] discusses this view at length and explains how the expressions *prāpya* and *prāvēśya* are derived from the terms *prāpa* and *prāvēśa* respectively. But Virji[245] upholds the view of Sten Know[246] who interprets both the expressions *prāpya* and *prāvēśya* as 'which is entered from', i.e., 'which borders on'.

The expression *Bhaṭāraka-bhēda* is met with in a grant of Dharsēna II[247]. Fleet[248] takes this expression to mean a division of that name. But, here again, Virji[249] explains the term *bhēda* as a small spot and refuses to take it as a territorial division. In so far as the term *Bhaṭāraka* could stand for the ruling Maitraka king, the expression in question may denote a piece of land personally owned by or set apart exclusively for the king.

Lastly, we have to discuss the term *maṇḍali*. About this term Virji[250] writes : "The term mandali is traced to the expression 'sopokedraka-maṇḍali' in a Maitraka grant : (Diskalkar, *op. cit.*, N.S.I., p. 17 ff); however, it is found to be a wrong reading for the expression 'sodakena kamaṇḍaluna' which also occurs in another grant of the same dynasty (Bühler, *op. cit.* VII, p. 67 ff.)." and hence refuses to further examine the term. But in a recently discovered grant of Dhruvasēna I[251] the term *maṇḍali* figures as a territorial sub-division. In this record the land granted is stated to have been situated in the south-western boundary of the Akshasaraka-maṇḍali in Hastavapr-āhaṛaṇi (*Hastavapraharaṇyām Akshasaraka-maṇḍalyā aparadakshiṇa-simni*). This leaves no doubt that the *Maṇḍali* was a sub-division of the *Āharaṇi*. Here again, the term *maṇḍali* is associated with the place name Akshasaraka. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that *maṇḍali* is synonymous with *prāpa* and *prāvēśa* which, as we have already shown, are used as sub-divisional suffixes for Akshasaraka (see the first paragraph above).

Coming to the administrators of these various units, we come across as many as five different designations denoting the heads of the various territorial divisions mentioned in the Maitraka grants. They are *Vishayapati, Uparika, Rāshṭrapati, Drāṅgika* and *Grāmakūṭa*. For three of these designations, *viz., Vishayapati, Drāṅgika* and *Grāmakūṭa*, we have corresponding administrative units, *viz., Vishaya, Draṅga* and *Grāma*. So we have to consider only the remaining two, *Uparika* and *Rāshṭrapati*. Virji[252] holds that *Rāshṭra* was probably just another name for *Āhāra* and that *Rāshṭrapati* was its head. This argument has been put forth quite convincingly. But, we have only to state that so far we have not come across the term *rāshṭra* in the sense of a territorial division in the Maitraka grants.

The term *uparika* occurring in a grant of Dharasēna II[253] has not been noticed by Virji. We have noticed that more terms than one were employed to denote one and the same administrative unit under the Maitraka administration as, far example, *Āhāra, Vishaya* and *Bhukti*. There is no wonder, therefore, if *Uparika* was a synonym of *Vishayapati*. The Maitraka grants do not furnish any details of the working of these different heads of the administrative units. However, in the case of the *Grāmakūṭas* we may suggest, on the analogy of the Gupta inscriptions, that they were assisted in matters of village administration by the *Mahattaras* in the Maitraka kingdom also.

(ii) Administration under Harsha

The age of Harsha marks an important epoch in the history of North India, because it was he who succeeded in establishing a big empire, bringing back, to a limited extent and for a short while, that political unity and solidarity which northern India had enjoyed under the Imperial Guptas. It was a hard task to carve out an empire in the midst of a number of independent states struggling for power and attacking one another. Harsha is compared with Samudragupta and Aśoka for his valour and piety respectively. He was the son of Prabhākaravardhana of the Pushpabhūti family. He ruled from 606 A.D. to 647 A.D.[254] According to Sharma[255] his empire included the territories of Kashmir and Nēpāl in the north, and it touched the Narmadā along its southern border. In the north-west it included major portions of Punjab and Sindh and in the west it touched the Bharoach coast and the Arabian sea. In the north-east his suzerainty was as far as the Brahmaputrā Valley and in the east included Bengal. In the south-east the whole of Orissa was within the limits of his domain and it touched the Bay of Bengal.

Our information about Harsha and his administration is mainly based on the *Harshacharita* of Bāṇa and Hiuen Tsang's accounts. It is rather ironical that we should get only two inscriptions of such a great ruler like Harsha. Epigraphy being our main concern let us try to know what information about the administration of Harsha is furnished by these two records. As regards the officials, the Banskhēra plate[256] of Harsha mentions *Mahāsāmanta, Mahārāja, Daussādhasādhanika, Pramātāra, Rājasthānīya, Kumārāmātya, Uparika, Vishayapati, Bhaṭa, Chāṭa, Sēvaka, Dūtaka, Mahāpramātāra* and *Mahākshapaṭalādhikaraṇādhikṛita*. This very list is found also in his Madhuban grant[257].

We know that the titles of *Mahāsāmanta* and *Mahārāja* were borne by feudatories and minor rulers.[258] Mention of these feudatories or petty rulers in both the inscriptions just referred to seems to indicate that they were taken into confidence by the king and entrusted with the administrative responsibility of the state.

The official called *Daussādhasādhanika* figures for the first time in the inscriptions of Harsha. If the order in which the officials are mentioned in these inscriptions signifies anything, and I feel it does because of the limited number of designations occurring here, *Daussādhasādhanika* seems to have been an official of high dignity, as he is mentioned immediately after *Mahāsāmanta* and *Mahārāja*. Sinha[259] gives the various

interpretations of this term such as 'one who undertook the difficult task', 'a porter or a superintendent of villages', 'a gate-keeper', etc. None of these interpretations can be verified, because the inscriptions neither specify the functions of this official nor do they name the department to which he belonged. But what is certain from the literal meaning of the term (one who undertook the difficult task) is that he was entrusted with some grave responsibility.

Of the two officials *Pramātāra* and *Mahāpramātāra*, it is obvious that the latter was superior to the former as he is endowed with the prefix *mahā* and was either a senior *Pramātāra* or the head of the *Pramātāras*. We have already come across, in the Maitraka grants, an official designation called *Pramatṛi*, which can be identical with the *Pramātāra* under discussion[260]. *Pramatṛi* Nāga, for instance, was the *Dūtaka* of a grant of Dhruvasena III[261]. While discussing the official designations occurring in the grants of the Maitrakas, we have stated that the *Pramatṛi* was an official connected with land survey or a judicial officer. Sinha[262] categorically states that *Pramatṛi* was an official of the judicial department at the time of Harsha. He stresses the etymological meaning of the term *pramātṛi* and holds that the official holding this designation must have been either a judge or an assessor of revenue. In this connection we have only to state that the etymology of a word cannot form the sole basis for the interpretation of the technical terms occurring in inscriptions. Thus, for example, the term *daṇḍanāyaka* has been taken by Bhandarkar[263] as equivalent to something like a 'Mansabdar' in the Mughal period. Altekar[264] holds that the *Pramātṛis* worked under the *Mahākshapaṭalika*, the superintendent of land records. This is certainly not to deny the possibility of *Pramātāras* performing the duties of a judge. For, we know that there was no clear cut distinction between civil, military and judicial functions in ancient Indian polity.

As to the designation *Rajasthanīya*, I would like to repeat the sense in which it has been taken with reference to the Maitraka grants, *viz.*, 'an officer acting for the king' because, if we take the general meaning of this designation, *viz.*, 'a Viceroy', the non-mention of a corresponding administrative unit in the inscriptions creates difficulty in justifying our stand.

The designation *Kumārāmātya* is well known from the times of the Guptas and we have no reasons to believe that it could have implied, in the time of Harsha, anything other than its earlier meaning.

There is no difficulty in explaining the terms *uparika* and *vishayapati*. We have already seen that the officials of these designations were the administrative heads of the territorial divisions called *Bhukti* and *Vishaya* respectively under the Gupta administration. These officials also figure in the grants of the Maitrakas. Now, both the inscriptions of Harsha refer to these territorial divisions. Therefore, it is reasonable to hold that the *Uparika* and the *Vishayapati* were the administrators of the administrative units called *Bhukti* and *Vishaya* respectively in the time of Harsha.

Chāta and *Bhaṭa* were soldiers in general as in the case of the Maitraka grants and the *Sēvaka* was a royal attendant.

The *Dūtaka* was the official charged with the execution of the royal grant and, as in the case of his counterpart in the Maitraka administration, he seems to have held this post as an additional charge. For, the *Dūtaka* of the two grants of Harsha, *viz.*, Skandagupta is styled as *Mahāpramātāra* and *Mahāsāmanta*.

Lastly, we discuss the designation *Mahākshapaṭalādhikaraṇādhikṛita*. We have seen how the term *mahākshapaṭalika* denoted an official in charge of the records of the State under the Maitraka administration. But obviously *Mahākshapaṭalādhikaraṇādhikṛita* of the time of Harsha was a much superior officer. Literally he was 'the high officer of the office of records'. Sinha[265] feels that this officer was stationed at the centre of the home dominion and held charge of the whole department of records. The Banskhēra plate of Harsha was engraved at the instance of *Mahākshapaṭalādhikaraṇādhikṛita Mahāsāmanta Mahārāja* Bhāna and the Madhuban grant at that of Īśvaragupta who, in his turn, bore all the titles of Bhāna. It seems that the terms *mahāsāmanta* and *mahārāja*, in this particular context, are to be treated as honorific titles. The same may hold good in case of the title *Mahāsāmanta* borne by the *Dūtaka* Skandagupta mentioned above, but not with reference to the other title (in fact it is a designation), *viz.*, *Mahāpramātāra*. For, we have an idea of the specific functions of the official called *Mahāpramātāra*.

Now, we may pass on to the territorial divisions mentioned in the two inscriptions of Harsha. The Banskhēra plate refers to the village of Markaṭasāgara situated in the western sub-division (*Paśchima-pathaka-sambaddha*, Text, l.7) of the Aṅgadīya-vishaya in the Ahichchhatra-bhukti. Similarly, the Madhuban grant refers to Sōmakuṇḍikāgrāma situated in the Kuṇḍadhāni-vishaya of the Śrāvasti-bhukti. From these references it becomes evident that in the administrative set up of Harsha the *Bhukti* was the largest administrative unit which was divided into a number of *Vishayas*, which were further sub-divided into *Pathakas*, the basic unit being the *Grāma*. Now, from the expression *Paśchima-pathaka-sambaddha*, it is possible to hold that each *Vishaya* was subdivided into at least two *Pathakas* named after their geographical situation either to the east or west, if not into four. The absence of this sub-division (*Pathaka*) in the Madhuban grant gives rise to the doubt if this pattern was followed in case of all the *Vishayas*.

The territorial divisions *Bhukti* and *Vishaya* are well known from the time of the Guptas. The Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti and the Kōṭivarsha-vishaya loom large in the Dāmōdarpur copper-plate inscriptions referred to earlier in this chapter. *Vishaya* also occurs in the grants of the Maitrakas. Therein *Pathaka* is a sub-division of the *Āhāra*, the latter of which is equated with the *Vishaya*. Therefore, it is not impossible to hold that the sub-division *Pathaka* was adopted by Harsha from the Maitraka administrative system.

Only two designations of the administrative heads of the territorial divisions are known from the inscriptions of Harsha. They are the *Uparika* and the *Vishayapati*. We have already shown how these two officials headed the *Bhukti* and the *Vishaya* respectively. Inscriptions do not inform anything about the heads of the *Pathakas* or the villages.

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13. F.W. Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 386-87.
14. V.R.R. Dikshitar, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-10.
15. D.C. Sircar, *IE(S).*, p. 351.
16. R.K. Mookerji, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
17. D.R. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
18. V.R.R. Dikshitar, *op. cit.*, p. 212; H.C. Raychaudhuri, *PHAI.*, p. 317.
19. D.R. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
20. *C.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 8 ff.
21. V.R.R. Dikshitar, *op. cit.*, p. 210.
22. *C.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 11 ff.
23. *Ibid.*, p. xli.
24. D.C. Sircar, *IEG.*, p. 380.
25. D.R. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.
26. D.C. Sircar, *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 87-88.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 88, n. 1.
29. H.C. Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 371.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 372.
31. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXII, p. 36, No. 4.
32. *Ibid.*, No. 1.
33. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 381, No. 230.
34. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 102 ff.
35. N.G. Majumdar in *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 7.
36. A.N. Lahiri, *CIGC.*, pp. 40-41.
37. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, p. 111.
38. *IEG.*, p. 202.
39. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, p. 127.
40. *Ibid.*, n. 5.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
44. Sten Know, *C.I.I.*, Vol. II, Part I, P. 103, No. XXXVIII
45. Bhaskar Chattopadhyay, *KSIS.*, pp. XXXIV ff.
46. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, p. 173.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 175 ff.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 181-82.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 114 ff.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 173, n. 4.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 114, n. 2.
53. B.N. Puri, *HIA.*, Vol. I, p. 94.
54. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 120 ff.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 164 ff.
56. *Ibid.*, pp. 173 ff.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 180, n. 5.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 181-82.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 186-87.
60. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 204-05, Nos. III and IV.
61. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 392, Nos. 339-40.
62. S.P. Tewari, *G.S. Gai Felicitation Volume*, pp.
63. *ARIE.*, 1962-63, No. B 250.
64. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, p. 121.
65. *IEG.*, p. 112.
66. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 48 ff.
67. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 213 ff.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 121-22.
69. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIII, p. 163, No. VII.
70. H. Lüders, *List.*, No. 1351.
71. R.D. Banerji in *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIII, p. 163, No. VII.
72. *KSIS.*, pp. 61 ff.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
75. D.C. Sircar in *AIU.*, p. 150.
76. A.S. Altekar, *SGAI.*, p. 335.
77. H.C. Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 464-65.
78. J. Marshall and others, *MS.*, p. 386, No. 829.
79. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 149-50.
80. *Ibid.*, pp. 151-52.
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 154-55.
82. *KSIS.*, pp. 97.
83. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, p. 137.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
85. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 9 ff.
86. *JRAS.*, 1924, pp. 401 ff., No. 3.
87. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IX, p. 242.
88. *KSIS.*, p. 104.

89. B.N. Puri, *IUK.*, p. 84.
90. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 41 and 43.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*, pp. 136-37.
94. *Ibid.*
95. *KSIS.*, pp. 111-12.
96. *Ibid.*, pp. 116-17.
97. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 262 ff.
98. *KSIS.*, p. 117.
99. *List.*, No. 929 n.
100. F.O. Oertel in *ASIAR.*, 1904-05, p. 81.
101. *List.*, No. 48.
102. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXV, pp. 190-91.
103. *List.*, No. 69a.
104. *JUPHS.*, 1939, p. 26, No. XVII.
105. *IEG.*, p. 213.
106. *C.I.I.*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 158.
107. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 200 ff.
108. H. Lüders in *Ibid.*, p. 207.
109. *List.*, Nos. 127, 128 and 141.
110. *Ibid.*, No. 125q.
111. *IEG.*, p. 379.
112. D.R. Bhandarkar, B.Ch. Chhabra and G.S. Gai, *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 336, Text, l.2; p. 337, n. 7.
113. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 152 ff.
114. Hirananda Sastri in *Ibid.*, p. 156.
115. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 1.
116. *Ibid.*, No. 11.
117. *IEG.*, p. 166.
118. *ASIAR.*, 1903-04, pp. 101 ff.

119. *Ibid.*, p. 108, No. 8.
120. *Ibid.*, Nos. 6 and 11.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 109, No. 22.
122. *SGAI.*, p. 345.
123. *ASIAR.*, 1903-04, p. 109, No. 20.
124. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 22.
125. *Ibid.*, No. 24.
126. *Ibid.*, No. 38.
127. *Ibid.*, Nos. 40 and 47.
128. *Ibid.*, No. 47.
129. *Ibid.*, No. 30.
130. *Ibid.*, No. 39.
131. *Ibid.*, No. 28.
132. *Ibid.*, pp. 95 ff.
133. *ASIAR.*, 1911-12, pp. 52-53.
134. *Ibid.*, 1903-04, p. 109, No. 18.
135. J.F. Fleet, *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, Nos. 55 and 56.
136. *ASIAR.*, 1903-04, p. 108, No. 12.
137. B.N. Puri in *HIA.*, Vol. I, p. 126.
138. *IEG.*, p. 295.
139. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 11.
140. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 216, Text, l.9.
141. *ASIAR.*, 1903-04, p. 108, No. 14.
142. *Ibid.*, No. 16.
143. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 99.
144. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XX, pp. 6-7.
145. *ASIAR.*, 1903-04, p. 109, No. 21.
146. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 100.
147. *Ibid.*, No. 40.
148. *Ibid.*, No. 1.
149. *Ibid.*, No. 16.

150. *Ibid.*, No. 21.
151. *Ibid.*, No. 11.
152. *Ibid.*, No. 40.
153. *Ibid.*, Nos. 22, 24, 38, 40 and 47.
154. *ASIAR.*, 1903-04, p. 109, No. 20.
155. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 93.
156. *Ibid.*, p. 275.
157. R.G. Basak in *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, p. 79.
158. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 52 ff.
159. *Ibid.*, Vol. XX, pp. 59 ff.
160. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 94.
161. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 340 ff.
162. *Apte.*, p. 47.
163. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 47.
164. *Ibid.*, No. 38.
165. *Ibid.*, No. 105.
166. *Ibid.*
167. *Ibid.*, No. 19.
168. *Ibid.*, No. 32.
169. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVI, pp. 17 ff., Text, l.1; Vol. XI, pp. 105 ff., Text, l.13.
170. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 338 ff., Text, l.6.
171. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 302 ff.
172. *IEG.*, p. 51.
173. G.V. Acharya, *HIG.*, Part I, p. 25, Text, l.14.
174. *Ibid.*, p. 26, Text, l.27.
175. *Ibid.*, p. 60, Text, l.3.
176. *Ibid.*, p. 122, Text, l.35.
177. *Ibid.*
178. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, p. 88, Text, l.49.
179. *Ibid.*
180. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, p. 339, Text, ll.6-7. However, the correct reading is *Dāṇḍapāśika*.

181. *HIG.*, Part I, p. 60, Text, l.3.
182. *Ibid.*, p. 72, Text, l.21.
183. *Ibid.*, Text, l.20.
184. *Ibid.*, p. 87, Text, l.3.
185. *Ibid.*, p. 93, Text, l.2.
186. *Ibid.*
187. *Ibid.*, p. 108, Text, l.15.
188. *Ibid.*
189. *Ibid.*, p. 214, Text, l.30.
190. *Ibid.*
191. *Ibid.*, p. 296, Text, l.76.
192. *Ibid.*, p. 44, Text, l.32.
193. *IEG.*, p. 273.
194. *HIG.*, Part I, No. 77.
195. e.g., Alinā copper-plate inscription of Śīlāditya VII, *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No. 39.
196. *IEG.*, p. 55.
197. *HIG.*, Part I, No. 43.
198. *IEG.*, p. 56.
199. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VII, pp. 188 ff. and 194 ff.
200. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 208 ff.
201. See No. 178 above.
202. *IEG.*, p. 101.
203. K.J. Virji, *AHS.*, p. 268, No. 18(b); p. 271, No. 40(a) and 43(a).
204. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 338 ff.
205. *IEG.*, pp. 51 and 67-68.
206. G.P. Sinha, *PGP.*, p. 117.
207. *IEG.*, p. 99.
208. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XI, pp. 174 ff.
209. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXII, pp. 114 ff.
210. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, p. 182.
211. *HIG.*, Part I, No. 96, Text, l.76.

212. *IEG.*, p. 178.
213. U.N. Ghoshal in *CA.*, p. 354.
214. *IEG.*, p. 327.
215. *HIG.*, Part I, No. 36, Text, l.3.
216. See No. 213 above.
217. The ten offences are enumerated thus : (1) disobedience of the king's order, (2) murder of a woman, (3) confusion of *varṇas*, (4) adultery, (5) theft, (6) pregnancy from one not the husband, (7) abuse and defamation, (8) obscenity, (9) assault and (10) abortion (P.V. Kane, *HDS.*, Vol. III, p. 264).
218. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 301 ff.
219. *IEG.*, p. 366.
220. *Ibid.*, p. 260.
221. *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. VII, p. 68.
222. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, pp. 85 ff.
223. See No. 213 above.
224. *PGP.*, pp. 189-90.
225. *HIG.*, Part I, No. 29, Text, l.32.
226. *IEG.*, p. 153.
227. *HIG.*, Part I, No. 40, Text, l.2.
228. *IEG.*, p. 39.
229. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 194 ff.
230. *Ibid.*, pp. 188 ff.
231. *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. VII, p. 72, Text, ll.5-6.
232. G. Bühler in *Ibid.*, p. 71.
233. *AHS.*, p. 235.
234. *PGP.*, p. 75.
235. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, p. 88, Text, l.43.
236. *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. VII, p. 79, Text, ll.15-16.
237. *Ibid.*, p. 75, Text, l.17.
238. *Ibid.*, Vol. XV, p. 187.
239. *AHS.*, pp. 235-36.
240. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

241. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 320, Text, l.12.
242. E. Hultzsch in *Ibid.*, p. 319.
243. *Ibid.*, Vol. XI, p. 111, Text, l.18.
244. V.S. Sukthankar in *Ibid.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 106-07.
245. *AHS.*, pp. 242-43.
246. *Ep. Ind.*., Vol. XI, p. 110.
247. *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XV, pp. 187-88.
248. J.F. Fleet in *Ibid.*, p. 188.
249. *AHS.*, p. 243.
250. *Ibid.*, p. 242, n. 6.
251. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVII, p. 169, Text, l.14.
252. *AHS.*, p. 237.
253. *HIG.*, Part I, p. 93, Text, l.2.
254. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri and G. Srinivasachari, *AHI.*, p. 242.
255. Baijnath Sharma, *HHT.*, p. 236.
256. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, pp. 208 ff.
257. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 67 ff.
258. *IEG.*, pp. 184 and 187.
259. *PGP.*, pp. 100-01.
260. *IEG.*, p. 255.
261. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, pp. 85 ff.
262. *PGP.*, p. 189.
263. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 96.
264. *SGAI.*, p. 199.
265. *PGP.*, p. 119.

CHAPTER II

MILITARY SYSTEM

Military System of the Mauryan Period

All the works dealing with the military organisation of the Mauryan period are based on the two important sources, *viz.*, the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and the notices of the Greek writers, particularly Megasthenes. The information furnished by these sources has special reference to the reign of the Maurya emperor Chandragupta. No doubt the same pattern of military organisation as detailed in the *Arthaśāstra* would have continued in the subsequent period. But we have no evidence to hold that the military principles and practices of the days of Chandragupta could be applicable *in toto* to the reign of Aśoka which is the starting point of our study. It is rather disappointing that Aśoka does not state anything about his military system in his inscriptions which speak so much about the various aspects of his civil administration. Yet, something can be said in this respect on the basis of the distribution of his inscriptions in a large part of the Indian sub-continent, and their meagre internal evidence.

We have already noted in Chapter I the extent of the empire of Aśoka as indicated by the location of his edicts. Possession of such a vast empire is a clear indication of the martial abilities of Aśoka. Even as a prince he had suppressed a revolt at Taxila. It is likely that after ascending the throne he followed the policy of aggression and conquest like his grandfather. But his only military achievement known from inscriptions is the conquest of Kaliṅga. In R.E. XII[1] Aśoka vividly describes the horrors and miseries of this war. One hundred and fifty thousand were carried away as captives, hundred thousand were slain and many times as many died. This clearly indicates the large size of Aśoka's army. Surely it must have been huge and well organised enough to cause such a havoc 'even in that ancient period when the weapons of destruction were not so diabolical and deadly as now', to quote Bhandarkar.[2] We have to note two more points in this connection. Firstly, the soldiers of the vanquished army were taken away as prisoners by the triumphant king, obviously to use them as slaves. Secondly, only hundred thousand soldiers had been

killed in battle, but many times that number had actually died. The obvious purport of this statement is that in the aftermath of the sanguinary war a large number of people had died for various reasons all connected with the military campaign. Bhandarkar[3], for one, points out that the death of these civilians was the result of burning and sacking. Dikshitar[4] cites this war as an example of *asura* war in the Mauryan period.

The term *nāgavana* occurring in P.E. V. is quite interesting. It occurs in all the five versions of this edict. In this edict Aśoka prohibits the killing of animals living in the Nāgavana on certain days. Discussing this term, Bühler states: "Particular forests, belonging to the Crown, were no doubt reserved in Priyadasi's days, as at present, for the breeding of elephants and these are meant here."[5] It is redundant to point out the importance of the elephant force in the ancient Indian military system. Chakravarti[6] states that from the 4th century B.C. onwards, the elephant occupied the first rank in military service. Therefore, we can safely hold that in the reign of Aśoka special attention was given to the breeding of elephants which were obviously used in times of war. Though the emperor's order is intended to protect all the animals living in the forest called Nāgavana, the very name of this forest clearly indicates the importance attached to the elephants.

In R.E. XIII Aśoka warns the inhabitants of the forest thus : "And they are told of the power (to punish them) which Dēvānampriya (possesses) in spite of (his) repentance, in order that they may be ashamed (of their crimes) and may not be killed."[7] This clearly indicates that even after the Kaliṅga war Aśoka, despite his conversion to Buddhism, maintained a well organised army powerful enough to face any contingency.

From the same edict[8] we further learn that Aśoka had maintained diplomatic relations not only with Ceylon, but with the Hellenistic monarchies of Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, Macedonia and Epirus. In this connection Chakravarti[9] supports the suggestion of V.A. Smith that diplomatic relations with such distant countries presuppose the existence of a seagoing fleet as well as an army.

Of course, what is so far known is hardly sufficient to form even a rough idea of the military organisation under Aśoka. But no further information is available from his inscriptions.

Military System of the post-Mauryan Period

The epigraphical sources are of little help to know about the Military organisation of the rulers who flourished during the period between the fall of the Mauryan empire and the rise of the Imperial Guptas. As such, it is impossible to state anything about the military activities of this period without referring to the non-epigraphical sources. Bṛihadratha, the last Mauryan emperor of Magadha was, according to the *Purāṇas* and *Harshacharita*, assassinated by his general Pushyamitra, who usurped the throne and founded a new line of kings. According to the *Purāṇas* Pushyamitra belonged to the

Śuṅga family. The most important political event of Pushyamitra's reign was the Greek or Yavana invasion from the north-west referred to by Patañjali in his *Mahābhāshya* and Kālidāsa in his *Mālavikāgnimitram*. From the above works the following historical picture emerges. The Yavanas came as far down as Madhyamikā (Nagari near Chitor) and Sāketa (Ayōdhyā), and placed these two cities virtually in a state of siege.[10] The Greek invasion led by the Bactrian king Demetrios son of Euthydemous, was successfully repulsed by the prince Vasumitra, son of Agnimitra and general of Pushyamitra. The battle was fought on the southern bank of the river Sindhu. According to Majumdar[11] the repulsing of the Yavana attack was no mean achievement on the part of the Śuṅga prince. Though we have no knowledge of the details of this fight, the very fact that the Śuṅgas could defeat the Greek invaders is a proof of the excellence of their military organisation. It is reasonable to suppose that Pushyamitra, who was a general under the last Mauryan emperor, more or less adopted the Mauryan military system. We come to know from the Ayōdhyā inscription[12] of about the first century A.D. that Pushyamitra had the title *Sēnāpati* and that he had twice performed the horse sacrifice. This piece of information, though meagre, is significant so far as it corroborates the military achievements of the Śuṅgas as known from the literary sources. Besides this, two other inscriptions of this period indicate the existence of cavalry in the military organisation. Thus, a votive inscription[13] on the *stūpa* I at Sāñchi refers to an *Asavārāka* (cavallerist). Another such inscription[14] from the Bhārhut *stūpa* also refers to *Asavārika* Sulabdha.

According to Pant "bow and arrow occur in the Shunga sculptures of Bharhut and Sanchi. In the sculptural remains of the Bharhut stupa are found representations of procession of foot-soldiers carrying bow and arrows. In the lowest architrave of south Gate way of the Great stupa at Sanchi, a battle-scene is beautifully carved and the soldiers are seen attacking the enemy with stones, bow and arrows."[15]

Now we pass on to the Hāthigumphā inscription[16] of the *Mahāmeghavāhana* Khāravela. This record belongs to the first half of the second century B.C. Khāravela was a great military genius. Even the very news of his heroic exploits is said to have caused terror in the heart of a Yavana king who had to retreat to Mathurā. It is further stated that Khāravela despatched to the western regions an army strong in cavalry , elephants, infantry and chariots *(pachhima-disaṁ haya-gaja-nara-radha-bahulaṁ daṁḍaṁ pathāpayati*, Text, l.4). Among the objects given by him are mentioned the elephants and chariots with their drivers *(haya-gaja-radha-saha-yaṁte*, Text. l.9). One of the epithets of Khāravela is "the one whose chariot and army are irresistable" *([a]patihata chaki-vāhini-balo*, Text, l.17). He is stated to have ploughed down the town of Pithuṁda with a plough of asses after having destroyed it *(Pithuṁdaṁ gadabha naṁgalena kāsayati*, Text, l.11). Thus, it becomes evident that Khāravela maintained the traditional four-fold army *(chaturaṅgabala)*. The number of the horses, elephants and chariots possessed by this king must have been very large because, he could afford to give them in charity, obviously after fulfilling the needs of his army. In line 13 of this inscription there is the expression *hathi-nivā[sa]-*

parisaram. Jayaswal, commenting on this expression, observes : *"hathi-nivāsa-parisaram*. This reading of the second word of the phrase is more reliable than the previous one *(hathi-nāvana-paripuram)*, *nivāsa = nirvāsa*. The reference seems to be to elephant preserves or some original form of *kheḍā* arrangement, invented by Khāravela. The elephants of Kaliṅga were very famous in ancient India. The strength of Khāravela probably lay in elephants. He took the fort of Pāṭaliputra with the help of elephants."[17] This reminds us of the Nāgavana mentioned in the P.E. V. of Aśoka referred to earlier in this chapter. Lastly, we come across a very strange custom associated with the military operations of the period to which this record belongs. We have already noted that Khāravela ploughed down the town of Pithuṃḍa with a plough of asses after destroying it. It seems that this act on the part of Khāravela was only to inflict the utmost degree of insult on the ruler of Pithuṃḍa. Jayaswal refers to this custom as mentioned in some Jaina works.[18] Even in these days we hear of processions on asses employed to humiliate the wicked.

Before passing on to a few epigraphical references to the military system of the Indo-Greeks and the Scythian and Parthian invaders, it is worthwhile to consider their coins which throw light on the types of the arms and armour used by them. Majumdar states : "In the coins of the Greek, Scythian and Parthian invaders the king wears coat of mail in chain of armour. Helmets with straight swords and lances are found. Spears, clubs and other weapons also find place."[19] We also come to know from the coins that the Scythians and Parthians were good archers. Chakravarti writes: "the Scythian and Parthian satraps, who invaded and conquered northwestern India in the first century B.C., appear to have been well-acquainted with the art of horse-archery. This is shown by certain types of their coins. King Azes I, Azilises and Azes II and the satrapa Jihuṇia or Zeionises are depicted on their coins as horsemen equipped with bows. It is not preposterous to think that superiority of cavalry in general and of horse-archery in particular, was one of the causes which facilitated their military success in India."[20] Pant[21] illustrates three types of bows depicted on the coins of these alien rulers.

Now we may examine what information the epigraphs of the period under discussion contain on this subject. The Gunji Rock inscription[22] of Kumāravaradatta, datable to the 1st century A.D., mentions *Amātya* Bōdhadatta who also held the offices of the *Daṇḍanāyaka* and *Balādhikṛita*, and *Amātya* Indradēva who was also a *Daṇḍanāyaka*. We have here two official designations, *viz*., *Daṇḍanāyaka* and *Balādhikṛita*. As shown by Sircar[23] the first designation lends itself to various interpretations. The epigraph under discussion has no clue for any specific interpretation of the term. It seems, in this particular case the term *daṇḍanāyaka* denotes anything but a military official, because it is difficult to imagine how two military offices of different ranks, *viz*., *Daṇḍanāyaka* and *Balādhikṛita* could be simultaneously held by one and the same individual. The other designation *Balādhikṛita* is generally taken in the sense of commander of an army.

The Gundā inscription[24] of the *Kshatrapa* Rudrasiṁha belonging to 181 A.D. mentions *Sēnāpati* Bāpaka, the Ābhīra. What is to be noted here is the fact that the Kshatrapas

adopted the Indian designation of *Sēnāpati* in their military system. Further, it seems that the office of the *Sēnāpati* was a hereditary one.

The Kānākherā stone inscription[25] of Śridharavarman belonging to 279 A.D. styles him a *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka*. Banerji,[26] who earlier edited this inscription, renders the term *mahādaṇḍanāyaka* as a judge or a general. We have already stated that this term is subject to different interpretations.

We have yet to discuss two more epigraphs of this period. The Junāgadh inscription[27] of the *Mahākshatrapa* Rudradāman, dated in the Śaka year 72, depicts him as a great conqueror. His military achievements are described at length. Line 13 of this inscription, while furnishing a list of sciences and arts in which he had gained proficiency, states that he was well versed in the management of horses, elephants and chariots, in the use of sword and shield, in pugilistic combats etc., and in the art of quick and efficient retaliations. The passage runs thus: *turaga-gaja-rathacharyy-āsi-charma-niyuddh-ādyā.... [ti]-para-bala-lāghava saushṭhava-kriyēṇa*. The contents of the passage are too clear to need any interpretation. The only point we have to note here is the reference to shields made of animal hides. Dikshitar[28] mentions different kinds of armours made of animal hides and other objects, as gathered from the *Śukranīti* and the epics. However, to the best of our knowledge the earliest epigraphical reference to shields made of leather is found in the Junāgadh inscription. The military achievements and equipments of Rudradāman, as described in this inscription, clearly indicate the maintenance of a large army consisting of horses, elephants and chariots, well organised and well trained.

It seems that the Śaka soldiers were known for their valour. For, there is some evidence to show that they were employed by the Indian rulers. Satya Shrava observes: "Śaka soldiers served under their own kings and also under Hindu kings. Just preceding Gautamiputra there was a king Śakasena in the Sātavāhana line. Among other views it is possible that he may have been given that name on account of employing a large number of Śaka soldiers in his army. Amongst the coins of the Sātavāhanas, those bearing the coin legends, *Śakasena* have been found. The Śaka soldiers had penetrated as far south as *Śrīparvata*. There are two sculptures at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa showing a warrior in Śaka dress."[29]

Inscriptions hardly reveal anything about the military system of the Kushāṇas. But their provenance over a large part of North India helps us to assess the extent of their empire which in turn indicates an efficient military organisation. Thus, the epigraphic records of the reign of Kanishka himself prove his control over Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Peshawar and Gandhara region and the Bahawalpur region north of Sind. According to Chattopadhyay "the annexation of new territories in and outside India was possible due to the super military power of the Kushāṇas which subdued the Yavanas, Śakas, Pahlavas and Hindus. An order was kept by military rule over a wide territory stretching from Balkh to Bihar. Besides, the existence of the Kushāṇa State for about two centuries

and half could not be maintained without a well planned military organisation, when China, Parthia and Rome flourished as highly ambitious imperial powers."[30]

Explaining the official designations *Daṇḍanāyaka* and *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* occurring in Kushāna inscriptions, Chattopadhyay States: "The term Daṇḍanāyaka may have originated if we judge by its derivative meanings to represent official in-charge of administration of punishment (Daṇḍa), held responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the conquered territories. The official concerned was expected to bring under control the law and order situation by his command over "bala" or army. Without being equipped with military power it would be risky for the Kushāṇa officials to make an attempt to establish an undisturbed peace".[31] This explanation sounds quite reasonable. According to this, the *Daṇḍanāyaka* under the Kushāṇas was primarily an administrator of a territory who carried out his functions with the help of the army. Thus, at least in certain cases, there seems to have been no clear division between civil and military officials under the Kushāṇas, which is an expected feature in a military government.

The Kushāna coins throw some light on their military system. The king himself was a soldier of the first order as seen on a coin of Kadphises I,[32] wherein he is depicted as an armed soldier, and was probably the supreme commander of the armed forces. In some cases the king appears on coins as riding an elephant or a car.[33] Two humped camels are seen on the reverse of a coin of Kadphises I.[34] We may, therefore, conclude that besides elephants, camels too were used by the Kushāṇas in warfare. The weapons of war and armours as depicted on the Kushāṇa coins include trident, battle-axe, club,[35] spear, a circular shield,[36] etc. An archer holding a bow, seen on the reverse of a coin of Huvishka,[37] indicates that the Kushāṇa army included archers.

Military System of the Guptas

Rise of the Imperial Guptas as a strong political power, after the fall of the Kushāṇas, marks an important epoch in Indian history, because it was they who, after establishing a vast empire, instituted a sound and benevolent administrative system that promoted progress in all fields of life, such as trade and commerce, art, architecture and literature. Heroism and the military genius of the Gupta kings, coupled with their qualities of head and heart, were responsible for this tremendous achievement. The careers and conquests of the Imperial Gupta kings show that they were great generals. The Allahābād *praśasti* of Samudragupta[38] is nothing but a saga of his military exploits. The total extermination of the nine states of Rudradēva, Matila, Nāgadatta, and other princes in Northern India, and his southern campaign over long distances, are ample proof of his military skill and organising capacity. He is known from his coins to have performed the *Aśvamēdha* sacrifice. Smith rightly calls him "Indian Napoleon."[39] Chandragupta II was the worthy son of a worthy father. He completed the work of conquest initiated by his father. He conquered the territories held by the Śakas and the Kushāṇas. He bequeathed through his military ability, a consolidated - empire to his son Kumāragupta I.

The reign of Kumāragupta is generally regarded as devoid of interest so far as military activities are concerned. But the task of preserving a vast empire, established by his father and grandfather, for a long period of nearly 40 years, which he carried out successfully, is no mean achievement. The invasion of the Hūṇas shortly after his death. shows under what stress and strain he had to protect the empire. But for an efficient army under his able command the Gupta empire would have had a premature death. He too is known to have performed the *Aśvamēdha* sacrifice. His son and successor Skandagupta won a complete victory over the Hūṇas, the cruel and barbaric enemies of the Gupta empire. Thus, the eventful history of the Imperial Guptas bears testimony to the martial ability of the kings of this dynasty. The legends on the coins of these kings also indicate the same thing. Thus, Samudragupta had the titles, *'Apratiratha'* (unrivalled car-warrior), *'Aprativārya-vīrya'* (of irresistible valour), *'Kṛitānta-paraśu'* (axe of death), *'Sarva-rāj-ōchchhēttā'* (uprooter of all kings), *'Vyāghra-parākrama'* (possessed of the strength of tiger), *'Aśvamēdha-parākrama'* (whose might was demonstrated by the horse sacrifice), *'Parākramanka'* (marked with prowess), etc., to mention a few simple ones. Inscriptions too mention similar titles. The Poona plates[40] of Prabhāvatiguptā describe Samudragupta as *'one who performed many horse sacrifices' (anēkāśvamēdhayāji)*. Lastly, l.17 of the Allahābād inscription describes him thus: *vividha-samara-śatāvataraṇa-dakshasya sva-bhujabala-parākrama-aika-bandhōḥ parākram-ānkasya* (who was skilful in engaging in hundreds of battles of various kinds, whose only ally was valour through the might of his own arm and who (has thus) the epithet *Parākrama)*. Chandragupta II has the titles *'Śrīvikrama'*, *'Vikramāditya '. Simhavikrama '*, etc., on his coins. In the Udayagiri cave inscription[41] his minister Vīrasēna Śāba states that Chandragupta II set out to conquer the whole world *(kṛitsnaprithvī-jay-ārthēna,* Text, l.5). Kumāragupta's coins have the titles *'Śrī-Mahēndra' 'Śrī-Aśvamēdha-Mahēndra' 'Simha-Mahēndra "* etc. Perhaps the only epithet of this king found in his epigraphic records, *viz., 'Mahēndrakalpa'* occurs, in his Tumain inscription.[42] We have already noted that Kumāragupta has no significant military conquests to his credit. Lastly, Skandagupta bears the titles *'Sudhanvī'* (skilled bowman), *'Vikramāditya'* etc., on his coins. But in his case his inscriptions are more eloquent than the coins. Thus, the Junāgaḍh inscription[43] describes him as *'svabhuja-janita-vīrya'* (who had developed valour through his own arms, Text, l.2); and the Bhitarī inscription[44] praises him as *'Gupta-vaṁśaika-vīra'* (the one hero of the Gupta lineage, Text, l.7). But, perhaps, his valour and sturdiness are best expressed in the first half of verse,4 of the last mentioned inscription. It reads: *Vichalita- kula -laskhmī-stambhanāy-ōdyatēna-kshititala-śayanīyē yēna nītās=trīyāmāḥ* (by whom, as he was intent upon steadying the tottering sovereignty of the House, several nights were spent with the earth for his bed, Text, l.10). Thus, the heroism and the military abilities of the Imperial Guptas are thoroughly attested to by their epigraphs and coins.

There seems to be truth in the statement of Majumdar that "If the existence of a number of Sāmanta princes or feudal chiefs bearing the titles of mahārāja, mahāsēnāpati,

mahāsāmanta, etc., mentioned in various Gupta epigraphs is accepted, then it is reasonable to conclude that the Guptas in their wars and conquests and in their task of guarding the frontiers requisitioned the service of feudal militia. The days of standing armies were drawing to a close."[45] For, from the Dāmōdarpur copper-plate[46] of the year 224 we come to know that the *Uparika* (name lost) of Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti possessed elephants, horses and soldiers *(Puṇḍravardhana-bhuktāv=Uparika Mahārājasya...rājaputra Dēvabhaṭṭārakasya hasty-aśva-jana bhōgēn=ānuvahamā[na]kē,* ..... Text, ll. 2-3). Though not stated in all instances, the analogy of the example just cited seems to indicate that provincial governors maintained a sizeable army to maintain law and order in the territory under their charge and also to assist their emperor in his military campaigns.

With this introduction we may now proceed to a discussion of the various military officials under the Gupta kings. Inscriptions furnish a number of designations of the military officials. That the king himself was the supreme commander of the armed forces goes without saying, because we have already noted how great generals the Imperial Gupta kings were. Next to the king there were:—

1. *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka*
2. *Sāndhivigrahika*
3. *Mahābalādhikṛita*
4. *Mahāpiłūpati*
5. *Mahāśvapati*
6. *Bhaṭāśvapati*

What is striking in this list of officials is the prefix *'mahā'* at the beginning of each designation except in the case of *Bhaṭāśvapati* and *Sāndhivigrahika*. A natural surmise from this prefix is the possibility of one or more officials of inferior rank working under these officials. But Gupta inscriptions do not furnish these designations of inferior rank. It is also possible that the Gupta emperors, themselves being fond of high sounding titles, as evidenced from their coin legends and their epithets in the inscriptions, preferred high sounding designations for their military officials too. This, perhaps, also indicates the importance attached to the military department by the Gupta kings. It may be noted that in civil departments, excepting the case of *Mahāpratīhāra* no other designation has the prefix *'mahā .'* Thus, we do not come across a *Mahādāṇḍapāśika* or a *Mahāchaurōddharaṇika* in the Gupta inscriptions. This problem does not arise in the case of *Uparika* and *Vishayapati* who were themselves the heads of their respective administrative units. But how this prefix could be omitted in the case of *Sāndhivigrahika* and *Bhaṭāśvapati* is beyond our comprehension.

We have already noted in connection with the administration of the Kushāṇas and the Guptas that the *Daṇḍanāyaka* and *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* figure for the first time in the

Kushāṇa inscriptions and that they were feudatory chiefs owing allegiance to the king and serving him in both military and civil fields of administration. The *Mahādaṇḍānāyaka* was not exclusively a military official. It seems that he was to maintain a sizeable army under his command and rush it to the battle field whenever required, as per the orders of the king. He does not seem to have entered the battle field himself and taken command of the battalion under normal circumstances because, there were specific officials holding the command of different wings of the army, such as *Mahāsēnāpati, Mahāpiłūpati, Bhaṭāśvapati*, etc. Of these officials the last two were obviously in charge of the elephant force and cavalry respectively. Though it is somewhat difficult to know the specific functions of the *Mahāsēnāpati*, as there are a few more designations of this general nature, his close association with the army *(sēnā)* is beyond doubt. Whatever has been said about the functions of the *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* cannot be easily dismissed as a sheer hypothesis because, it is based on the fact that the word *daṇḍa* has several meanings. Thus, Apte[47] lists as many as 33 meanings for the word *daṇḍa* alone and meanings of 'a judge', 'a head police officer', 'a magistrate', 'the leader of an army', 'a general' and 'a king' for *daṇḍanāyaka*.How the *Mahādaṇḍaṇāyaka* was related to the other military officials cannot be ascertained. The *Mahādaṇḍaṇāyakas* met with in the Gupta inscriptions are Harishēṇa, the composer of the Allahābād *praśasti*, who is also termed *Sāndhivigrahika* and *Kumārāmatya*, and who was the son of *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* Dhruvabhūti, and *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* Tilabhaṭṭaka who executed the *praśasti*.

Another such official connected with the military department but actually not participating in the warfare was the *Sāndhivigrahika*. This official is universally considered as 'a Minister for peace and war.' This designation appears for the first time in the Gupta inscriptions. For paucity of evidence, the role played by this official in formulating the foreign policy, whether it was a treaty of peace or war, cannot be ascertained. What all we know from the inscriptions is the fact that both *Sāndhivigrahika* Harishēṇa under Samudragupta and *Sāndhivigraha* Vīrasēna Śāba under Chandragupta II, were poets. The poetic genius of Harishēṇa is proved in the Allahābād *praśasti*, whereas Vīrasēna Śāba is described in the Udayagiri Cave inscription[48] as 'conversant with Grammar, Polity, Logic and Popular Usage and Custom, and a poet' (*śabd-ārtha-nyāya-lōka-jñāh=kavih*, Text, l.4). From their literary expertise it is natural to hold that one of their functions was to draft royal letters.

The order in which we have enumerated the different designations (p. 46 above) does not, in all probability, signify official hierarchy in that sequence. On the basis of the word *adhikṛita*, forming the second component of the designation of *Mahābalādhikṛita* we may suggest that he was the highest military official under the Imperial Guptas. Sircar[49] renders this term as 'the great commander.' This point becomes clear when we compare this designation with those of *Mahāpiłūpāti* and *Bhaṭāśvapati* in which *piłū* and *bhaṭa* and *aśva* refer to particular sections of the army whereas *bala* stands for the armed forces in general. Thus, we may safely conclude that *Mahābalādhikṛita* was

the chief of the whole military establishment. *Mahābalādhikṛita* Gōpasvāmin figures in the Nālandā copper-plate inscription[50] of Samudragupta. In this record Gōpasvāmin is also styled *Mahāpilūpāti* and *Akshapaṭalādhikṛita*. Holding of more than one post simultaneously by one and the same individual is already known to us. So far as the post of *Mahāpilūpati* is concerned it is likely that *Mahābalādhikṛita* Gōpasvāmin was holding it as an additional charge at the time of the writing of the inscription. Another *Mahābalādhikṛita* Pṛithivishēṇa is met with in the Karamḍāṁḍā stone inscription[51] of Kumāragupta. His is an interesting case in the Gupta administrative system. It is said that he was at first a *Mantri* and *Kumārāmātya* under the king, and subsequently became a *Mahābalādhikṛita* (*Pṛithivishēṇō Mahārājādhirāja-śrī-Kumāraguptasy Mantri-Kumārāmatyō=nantaraṁ cha Mahābalādhikṛitaḥ*, Text, ll.7-8). By this it stands proved that a civil official could be transferred to a responsible post in the military department under the Gupta administrative system. In this case it is probable that the king, being pleased with the military abilities of *Mantri-Kumārāmātya* Pṛithivishēṇa, elevated him to the rank of *Mahābalādhikṛita*. Therefore, it is not unlikely that all those who entered the royal service were well trained in military operations. The Majhgawāṁ copper-plate inscription[52] of the Parivrājaka *Mahārāja* Hastin, dated in the year 191 (510-11 A.D.) refers to *Mahābalādhikṛita* Nāgasiṁha as the *Dūtaka* of the charter. Further, the designation *Mahābalādhikṛita* also occurs in the inscriptions of the Uchchhakalpa *Mahārāja* Śarvanātha.[53] Though not of the Imperial Guptas these records belong to their reigning period.

Two inscriptions of the Guptas mention *Mahāpilūpati*. As known from the Nālandā copper-plate inscription referred to above, Gōpasvāmin was a *Mahāpilūpati* under Samudragupta. The Guṇaighar inscription[54] of Vainyagupta mentions *Mahāpilūpati* Vijayasēna who also held certain other offices. Sircar[55] renders this term as 'the great superintendent of elephants; chief of the elephant corps; the master of elephants'. He states that the word *pīlū* is the same as Perso-Arabic *fil*.

Mahāśvapati figures in a Bhiṭā seal[56] which runs thus : *Mahāśvapati-Mahādaṇḍanāyaka Vishṇu-rakshita-pād-ānugṛahīta-Kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇasya*. Here we have a *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka* who is mentioned as *Mahāśvapati* 'supreme commander of the cavalry'. *Bhaṭāśvapati* Yakshavatsa figures on a Basāḍh seal.[57] He was a "Commander of Infantry and Cavalry." Though it is tempting to consider *Bhaṭāśvapati* as working under the command of *Mahāśvapati* it may not be true because, *Mahāśvapati* was obviously in charge of only the cavalry, whereas *Bhaṭāśvapati* had both infantry and cavalry (*bhaṭa* and *aśva*) under his command. Before concluding the discussion on the military officials it may be noted that an official called *Hastyaśvajanavyāpṛita* figures in the Kalāchhalā grant[58] of Iśvararāta of the 4th century A.D. However, this designation does not occur in the epigraphs of the Imperial Guptas. Another such epigraph mentioning military officials is the Talēśvara copper-plate inscription[59] of Dyutivarman. It is assigned to the 6th century A.D. and mentions *Pilūpati*, *Aśvapati* and *Jayanapati* (probably master of armour). The last-mentioned official is not found mentioned in the Gupta records.

Having dealt with the military officials, we now pass on to military offices. Two such offices are mentioned in the Basāḍh seals just referred to. One of them[60] refers to the *Raṇabhāṇḍāgārādhikaraṇa*, rendered by Bhandarkar[61] as "Office of Military Store House", and the other to the *Balādhikaraṇa*. Bhandarkar[62] seems to take *Balādhikaraṇa* in the sense of a military official. But, it does not seem to be convincing for, if a military official was meant by this term, the formation should have been *Balādhikṛita* as in the case of *Mahābalādhikṛita*. Or, if an official connected with a military office (not actually leading the forces) was meant, then the formation should have been *Balādhikaraṇādhikṛita* as in the case of *Mahākshapaṭalādhikaraṇādhikṛita* occurring in the epigraphs of Harsha. Further, the word *adhikaraṇa* undoubtedly means an office as evidenced from the expression *adhishṭhānādhikaraṇa* which we have explained in Chapter I. Therefore, *Balādhikaraṇa*, just as *Raṇabhāṇḍāgārādhikaraṇa*, should necessarily denote an office, and not an official. For the first time we come across these military offices in the Gupta period so far as epigraphical sources are concerned. The *Raṇabhāṇḍāgārādhikaraṇa*, as the word itself shows, must have been responsible for the storage and proper supply of arms and equipments required by the fighting forces. Possibly this office also looked after the payment of salary to the soldiers. The other office, *Balādhikaraṇa* was probably engaged in recruiting the soldiers and looking after their welfare in general.

The Gupta inscriptions have some references to the different units of the army. Thus :

1. The expression *mahā-nau-hasty-aśva-jayaskandhāvār-Ānandapura-vāsakāt* (Text, l.1) occurs in the Nālandā copper-plate inscription of Samudragupta, mentioned earlier.
2. This very expression occurs with reference to the *Jayaskandhāvāra* Kṛipura in the Guṇaighar inscription of Vainyagupta, referred to above.
3. The expression *hasty-aśva-jana-bhōgēn-ānuvahamānakē* occurs with reference to the *Uparika* of the Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti in the Dāmōdarpur copper-plate inscription of the Gupta year 224, to which we have already referred.
4. An army official called *Hasty-aśva-jana-vyāpṛita* figures in the fragmentary Kalāchhalā grant of Iśvararāta of the 4th century A.D., which has been noticed above. Sircar[63] explains that this ruler was a feudatory under a Gupta monarch.
5. The Dēō-Barṇārk inscription[64] of Jīvitagupta II (a king of the Later Gupta family of Magadha) has the expression *mahā-nau-aśva-patti-sambhāra-durnivārāj-jayaskandhāvārād-Gōmatikoṭṭaka-samīpa-vāsakāt*. All these references mention the *hasti* (the elephant force) and the *aśva* (the cavalry) invariably. The infantry is mentioned by the word *jana* in the third and fourth references, and *patti* in the last quoted one.

Neither the inscriptions of the Guptas refer to war-chariots nor do their coins depict them, though the expression *apratiratha* occurs in l.24 of the Allahābād pillar inscription

and l.1 of the Bilsad inscription,[65] where Samudragupta is described as *Prithivyām-apratirathaḥ*. In the case of the Kushāṇas too, there is no evidence to say that they had chariots. The epithet *apratiratha* seems to have been conventionalised soon after the time of Khāravela of Kaliṅga.

We have already seen that three of the inscriptions referred to above, *viz.*, the Nālandā, Guṇaighar and Dēō-Barṇārk inscriptions, mention the word *nau* meaning a ship. A copper-plate grant[66] of Dharmāditya of the 6th century A.D. refers to a *nāvātakshēṇi* or a ship-building harbour (Text, ll.24-25) and another grant[67] of the same ruler refers to a *nau-daṇḍika* or a ship's mast (Text, l.23). The Allahābād pillar inscription states that Samudragupta's sway extended over the dwellers of islands, including Siṁhaḷa *(Saiṁhaḷak-ādibhiś=cha sarvva-dvīpa-vāsibhir=ātmanivēdana* etc., Text, ll.23-24). If the identity of Chandra of the Meharauli pillar inscription with Chandragupta II, as suggested by Bhandarkar,[68] is accepted, we have another instance of the naval power of the Guptas. For, it is stated in this record that Chandra, crossing the seven mouths of the Sindhu, conquered the Vāhlikas in battle *(tīrtvā sapta-mukhāni yēna samarē Sindhōr=jjitā Vāhlikā*, Text, l.2). Even if it is argued that there is no clear statement of Samudragupta's actual conquest of the islands in the Allahābād inscription, the Meharauli pillar inscription refers in clear terms to such a maritime adventure on the part of Chandra. And the arguments of Bhandarkar[69] regarding the identity of the latter with Chandragupta II are more than convincing. We may, therefore, safely conclude that the Imperial Guptas had instituted a naval wing in their military system. But then the non-mention of a naval officer in the inscriptions remains unexplained.

The word *skandhāvāra* occurring in the expression *mahā-nau-hasty-aśva-jayaskandhāvāra* in the Nālandā inscription referred to above denotes a military camp. Though this word has the other meaning of a royal capital or residence,[70] its association with the different army units indicates the sense of a military camp. Another such camp near a place called Gōmatikoṭṭaka is mentioned in the Dēō-Barṇārk inscription referred to already. Here the place-name Gōmatikoṭṭaka is significant, because the word *koṭṭa* means a fort.[71] The suffix *ka* in the word *koṭṭaka* may indicate the small size of the fort. Thus, it becomes evident that there were a number of military camps established under the Gupta system of military administration. On the analogy of the *Uparika* of the Puṇḍravardhana- bhukti (see p. 49 above) we may conclude that a sizeable army consisting of different units was stationed at the provincial headquarters.

Fortunately, the inscriptions and the coins of the Guptas speak enough of the different kinds of war weapons used in this period. The Allahābād pillar inscription furnishes a long list of them. The pertinent passage runs thus: *paraśu-śara-śaṅku-śakti-prās-āsi-tōmara-bhindipāla-nārācha-vaitastik-ādy-anēka-praharaṇa-virūḍh-ākula-vraṇa-śat-ānēka-śōbhā-samuday-ōpachita-kāntatara-varshmaṇaḥ* (Text, ll.17-18). As many as ten offensive weapons are listed here. They are *Paraśu* (battleaxe), *Śara* (arrow), *Śaṅku* (spike), *Śakti* (spear), *Prāsa* (barbed dart), *Asi* (sword), *Tōmara* (iron club), *Bhindipāla* (javelin for throwing), *Nārācha* (barbed

arrow) and *Vaitastika* (span-long arrow). This list need not be considered a conventional one. For, many of these weapons, if not all, are illustrated on the Gupta coins.[72] Further, sculptures and paintings of this period (at Ajanta) depict many more weapons, shields, etc. Incidentally the Gupta coins bear testimony to the practice of horse-archery under the Guptas. The coins of Chandragupta II,[73] Kumāragupta I[74] and Prakāśāditya[75] depict them as archers mounted on horses.

At this stage we may consider the role of guilds in the military system of the Guptas. Majumdar, while discussing the term *śrēṇivala* occurring in the *Arthaśāstra*, states: "But whatever may be correct ..... some of the ancient guilds also possessed military resources of no mean worth, and that they played no insignificant part in the polity of ancient India."[76] He traces the first stage of the corporate activity in economic life, that is to say the first appearance of the guilds, to a period before 800 B.C.[77] So far as we are concerned, assemblies possessed of military forces and functions figure for the first time in the *Ashṭādhyāyī*[78] of Pāṇini who mentions the *āyudhajivi-saṅghas*. Kauṭilya also refers at several places in the *Arthaśāstra*[79] to the *śrēṇivala* which he includes among the various classes of troops that the king might possess. But perhaps the earliest epigraphical reference to a guild with military connection is to be found in the Mandasōr stone inscription[80] of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman. A passage from this inscription, describing the accomplishments of the guild of the silk-weavers in various sciences and arts, refers to the military skill of some of the members thus: *ady-āpi ch=ānyē samara-pragalbhāḥ=kurvvanty=arīṇām=a-hitaṁ prasahya* (Text, l.10). This statement clearly proves the existence of the trade-cum-military guilds in the Gupta age. The word *ady-āpi* in this statement is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it indicates a fairly long history of the military nature of the guild of silk-weavers. And secondly, it suggests the readiness and enthusiasm of these heroic people to fight. Therefore, it seems that the Gupta kings utilised the services of the semi-military guilds in their warfares though there are no specific instances in their inscriptions to this effect.

MILITARY SYSTEM OF THE POST-GUPTA PERIOD

(i) *Military System of the Maitrakas*

Elsewhere we have already noticed how, towards the close of the 5th century A.D., the Maitrakas carved out a small kingdom for themselves, which was destined to last for a long period of about three centuries. As many as 19 rulers of this dynasty are known to history. Bhaṭārka took advantage of the weakness of the Gupta power and shook off their yoke. His son Dharasēna I consolidated the power and position acquired by his father. But, it was, however, the next ruler Drōṇasiṁha who assumed the status of an independent king and called himself *Mahārāja* which marked the final rejection of the Gupta suzerainty. Dhruvasēna I the next ruler, seems to have fought with Yaśōdharman of Mālava. The increase in the power and prestige

of the Maitrakas under Dhruvasēna is attested to by the fact that a ruling family called the Gārulakas acknowledged his supremacy. Dharapaṭṭa, who succeeded Dhruvasēna I had a very brief rule. Guhasēna, the son and successor of Dharapaṭṭa won a victory over the Maukharis. The next ruler Dharasēna II succeeded in maintaining the independence of the Maitraka kingdom against the powerful Maukhari ruler Iśānavarman. The former was succeeded by his son Śīlāditya I whose rule extended over the territory from Ujjain in Eastern Mālava up to the western ocean or to Cutch which in terms of Puranic geography, is the limt of the western country. The next king Kharagraha ruled for a short period. He was succeeded by his son Dharasēna III who, in turn, was succeeded by Dhruvasēna II. Both these rulers had to acknowledge the overlordship of the Chālukyas of Bādāmi. However, according to Hiuen Tsang, Dhruvasēna II changed his allegiance from the Chālukyas to Harsha whose daughter he married. Dharasēna IV, the son and successor of Dhruvasēna II, was the most powerful king of the Maitraka dynasty. He is the only Maitraka ruler to have assumed the imperial title of *Chakravartin*. His reign, though a short one, is noteworthy because, he regained the prestige of the dynasty which was waning under his predecessors. He seems to have been humbled by Chālukya Vikramāditya I. He was succeeded by his elder brother Kharagraha II who is known from only one grant and who ruled for a very short period. The next king Śīlāditya II seems to have ousted the Sēndrakas from southern Gujarat, though he was defeated by the Chālukyas. But he displayed his prowess in driving away the Arabs who raided Goghā, a port on the eastern coast of Kāṭhiāwād. His successor Śīlāditya III, who ruled for a period of about 20 years, bore imperial titles. But he seems to have been defeated along with certain other kings, by Chālukya Vinayāditya. The next ruler Śīlāditya IV seems to have initially disregarded the Chālukyas. But later he was defeated by Vikramaditya II and had to surrender a large part of his kingdom. A greater calamity for him was the formidable invasion of the Arabs, who, along with the other states in the north-west, wrecked the Maitraka kingdom. Śīlāditya V, who succeeded Śīlāditya IV, put together the scattered remnants of the kingdom and probably tried in vain to regain the province of Mālava which was usurped by Gurjara-Pratihāra Nāgabhaṭa. He could recover only the Khēṭak-āhāra. He is credited with a victory over the Arabs who invaded for the second time. Śīlāditya VI, the last ruler of the Maitraka dynasty, bore all the imperial titles of his family. Once again the Arabs invaded the Maitraka territory in his reign and hit the final blow.[81]

This brief account of the Maitraka rulers clearly shows that, though they were not great conquerors, they had to struggle hard for their existence in the face of ambitious powers like the Chālukyas and others. The fact that they not only held power for about three centuries but also gave an efficient and benevolent administration to their subjects and created an atmosphere for the all round progress of the people, bears testimony to their efficient military administration.

It is disappointing to note that the Maitraka grants which speak volumes about their civil administration should have very little to state about their military system. Their list of officials hardly includes a military official. However, we shall muster together whatever little information that is available in these records and try to furnish a connected account of the military system of the Maitrakas as far as possible.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of their military system is to be found in the invariable mention, in almost every grant, of the four kinds of forces with reference to Bhaṭārka, the founder of the family. He is described as *maula-bhṛita-mitra-śrēṇi-bal-āvāpta-rājyśrīḥ*[82](One who acquired the goddess of royalty through the strength of the four kinds of forces, *viz., Maula, Bhṛita, Mitra* and *Śrēṇi*).

Kauṭilya[83] discusses in detail the merits and defects of the different types of forces and prescribes occasions for employing one or the other kind of forces. According to him[84] the army consists of six kinds of forces, *viz., Maula* (hereditary troops), *Bhṛitaka* (hired troops), *Śrēṇi* (corporation of soldiers), *Mitra* (troops belonging to a friend), *Amitra* (troops belonging to an enemy) and *Aṭavi* (wild tribes). He further states that, of these forces, that which is mentioned first is better than the one subsequently mentioned in the order of enumeration (*pūrvaṁ pūrvaṁ ch=aishāṁ śrēyas=sannāhayitum*).[85]

We note that Bhaṭārka possessed the first four kinds of troops out of the six mentioned by Kauṭilya. The repeated occurrence of the expression *maula-bhṛita* etc., with reference to Bhaṭārka in all the Maitraka grants is likely to impart a conventional sense to it. But we have reasons to think that Bhaṭārka actually possessed these troops. In the first place, the expression *maula-bhṛita*, etc., appears for the first time in the grants of the Maitrakas so far as epigraphy is concerned. That is to say, they did not borrow it from their predecessors and erstwhile overlords. For, we do not come accross this expression in the Gupta inscriptions. Secondly, Bhaṭārka, himself being a general of the Guptas, would have thoroughly known the significance of the terms *maula, bhṛita*, etc., and made use of these different troops in shaking off the yoke of the Guptas when an opportunity favoured him. It is not unlikely that the term *maula* with reference to Bhaṭārka stands for the Gupta army which was placed under his control and which he utilised against his overlords. For, at least inscriptions do not inform if he possessed a hereditary army of his own. In fact, his antecedents are not known. Regarding his employment of the mercenary class of soldiers (*Bhṛita*) we may not expect details from the inscriptions for, it seems to have been too common a practice in ancient Indian military organisation. We do not know who were his friends whose forces (*Mitra*) he might have utilised. Same is the case with regard to his employment of the corporation of soldiers. But we have to note two things in this connection. Firstly, we have already noted that such guilds of soldiers did exist in the days of Kumāragupta I. Secondly, the guild of silk- weavers, whose activities are described at length in the Mandasōr inscription, is said to have hailed from the Lāṭa-vishaya (*Kusuma-bhar-ānata ..... ramaṇyāt Lāṭa-vishayān-nag-āvṛita-śailā=jagati* ..... Text, l-3).[86] This is significant because Kauṭilya also refers to the semi-

military guilds of Surāshṭra (*Kāmbhōja- Surāshṭra-kshatra-śrēṇy-ādayō vārtā-śastr-ōpajīvinaḥ*).[87] Thus, the early existence of the semi-military guilds in the regions of Lāṭa and Surāshṭra becomes well attested to. And there is no wonder, if Bhaṭārka employed them in the task of carving out a kingdom for himself.

Virji remarks : "It may be gathered from Hiuen Tsiang that the army during the Maitraka period still consisted of the four classical arms, elephantry, cavalry, infantry and the chariots."[88] Let us examine to what extent this statement can be substantiated by epigraphical evidence. In the Maitraka grants most of the kings are described as killing the elephants of the enemies. Thus, we have a number of expressions, such as *sva-bhuja-balēna para-gaja-ghaṭ-ānīkānām-ēka-vijayī*, referring to Dhruvasēna I;[89] *sa-mada-para-gaja-ghaṭ-āsphōṭana-prakāśita-satīva-nikashaḥ*, referring to Guhasēna;[90] *kōp-ākṛishṭa.....vidit-āri-kari-kumbhasthala*, etc., referring to Śīlāditya III,[91] etc. Hence, it becomes clear that the Maitrakas possessed elephants as an arm of their army because, they could not have easily destroyed the elephants of the enemies without possessing elephantry themselves. Besides, two grants of Dharasēna II[92] mention an official or officials called *Hasty-aśv-ārōha*. Since, in both the instances this expression occurs at the end of the list of officials, and is followed by the word *ādīn* (*hastyaśv-ārōh-ādīn*), it is not clear if it denotes an official in singular or refers to the class of officials who mounted the elephants and horses. But it is a matter of common sense that this expression should be split into *Hasty-ārōha* and *Aśv-ārōha*. Exactly the same terms, *viz.*, *Hathārōha* and *Asārōha*, occur in the Prakrit Brāhmī inscription[93] on a wooden pillar found at Kirārī, datable to the 2nd century A.D. Thus, the reference to elephant-riders and horse-riders in the Maitraka grants enables us to hold that their army included elephantry and cavalry.

There is no reference to war chariot in the Maitraka grants. We have already noted that neither the Kushāṇas nor the Guptas employed this wing of army. It is likely that the Maitrakas too did not employ chariots in their warfare. Sinha[94] takes the mention of chariot as forming an army unit by Hiuen Tsang as conventional and not real.

No military official is included in the list of officials addressed to by the kings in the Maitraka grants. But fortunately we come across at least two officials of the military department, *viz.*, *Sāndhivigrahika* and *Balādhikṛita*, who figure as the writers of the Maitraka grants. We have discussed these terms in detail with reference to the Gupta military system. The designation *Sāndhivigrahika* and its variants *viz.*, *Sandhivigrahika*, *Sandhivigrahādhikṛita*, *Sandhivigrahādhikaraṇādhikṛita* and the higher designation *Mahāsandhivigrahādhikṛita* occur in the Maitraka grants. *Sāndhivigrahika* Skandabhaṭa is well known in these grants. Dēva, son of Mādhava, Vatrabhaṭṭi, Chandrabhaṭṭi, etc., are the other *Sāndhivigrahikas* figuring in the Maitraka grants. Only two names of the *Balādhikṛitas* appear in these grants. Thus, in a grant of Śīlāditya III[95] its writer *Divirapati* Haragaṇa is said to be the son of the *Balādhikṛita* Bappa-bhōgika. Both of them figure again in a grant of Śīlāditya IV.[96] But the name of the *Balādhikṛita* Bappa-bhōgika does

not occur independently. *Balādhikṛita* Gillaka, son of Buddhabhaṭa was the writer of two grants of Śīlāditya V.[97] Here we may note in passing that both Bhaṭārka and Dharasēna I had the title of *Sēnāpati*, and one of the five titles of Dhruvasēna I was *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka*. We have already referred to the *Hasty-ārōhas* and *Aśv-ārōhas*. They seem to have been ordinary soldiers.

A number of places described as *jayaskandhāvara*, figuring in the Maitraka grants, bear testimony to the march of their army. We come across more than fifteen such encampments. Of these places, Khēṭaka, Bharukachchha and Pūlēṇḍaka, each occurring thrice, seem to be important ones. The two places Bhadrapattanaka[98] and Bhadrōpātta,[99] which are mentioned as victorious camps in two different grants of Dharasēna II, seem to be identical. On one occasion the army of Śīlāditya I is seen camping at a place called Homba in the outskirts of Valabhī (*Valabhī-pradvāra-Homba-vāsakāt*).[100] But none of these references furnish any worthwhile information on any aspect of the Maitraka military system.

The only weapons occurring in the Maitraka grants are sword and bow. Guhasēna is described as *śaiśavāt=prabhṛiti khaḍga- dvitīya-bāhur=ēva*[101] (to whom his sword was indeed a second arm from his childhood). Dharasēna II is described as *sahaja-śakti-śikshā-viśēsha-vismāpit=ākhila-dhanurddharaḥ*[102] (who astonished all archers by the speciality of his innate strength and skill acquired by practice), and as *sva-dhanu-prabhāva*, etc.[103] Dharasēna IV is described as *kārmmukē dhanur-vvēda iva sambhāvit-āśēsha-lakshhya-kalāpaḥ*[104] (who, as if he were himself the science of archery of bowmen, perceived at once all objects that should be aimed at). Thus, it seems that archery was the mainstay of the Maitraka military power. Sinha[105] seems to take the mace (*gadā*) and the discus (*chakra*) referred to in a grant of Śīlāditya VII, as weapons actually used in warfare. But we have to note that the occasion for the mention of these weapons arises only out of the poet's fancy to compare and contrast Kharagraha II with the god Vishṇu with the help of *double entendres*.[106]

(ii) *Military System of Harsha*

Harsha occupied the throne of Thaneswar at a critical moment in its history. The neighbouring state of Kanauj was overrun by the powerful king of Mālava who intended to attack Thaneswar itself. Two successive rulers, *viz.*, Harsha's father Prabhākaravardhana and brother Rājyavardhana had died very recently. The kings of Lāṭa, Mālava and Gurjara, who were hostile to Prabhākaravardhana, probably continued the same attitude towards Harsha too.[107] That Harsha rose equal to the occasion and raised the status of the small principality of Thāneswar to that of the most powerful kingdom in Northern India is a clear attestation to his valour and military strength. Of his numerous campaigns, those against Śaśāṅka and the Chālukya king Polekēśi II are the major ones. He won a victory over Śaśāṅka, but could not succeed against Polekēśi II. Several records of the successors of Polekēśi II claim that he earned the title of *Paramēśvara* by defeating Harsha. It may be noted that these records describe the latter as *sakal-ōttarāpatha-nātha, Uttarāpathī-ādhipatī*.

etc. Thus, for example the Gadval plates[108] have the passage *samara-saṁsakta-sakal-öttarāpathēśvara-śrī-Harshavarddhana-parājay=ōpalabdha Paramēśvar=āpara-nāmadhēyasya* (Text, ll. 8-9). All this implies that Harsha possessed a large army well trained and efficiently managed.

The two inscriptions of Harsha, *viz.*, the Banaskhēra plate[109] and the Madhuban grant,[110] have very little to infom about his military system. The first record was issued from the victorious camp *(jaya-skandhāvāra)* at Vardhamānakōti and the other from the victorious camp at Kapitthika. Both of these camps are described as *mahā-nau-hasty-aśva-jaya-skandhāvara*. Thus, we come to know about elephantry and cavalry forming two wings of Harsha's army. As for the mention of boats *(nau)*, Thaplyal[111] states that boats were meant for riverine military transport and did not constitute a separate naval wing. This view seems to be convincing because, neither Hiuen-Tsang nor Bāṇa refer to the naval force of Harsha. The Aihole inscription of Polekēśi II[112] refers to the elephant force of Harsha *(yudhi-patita-gajēndr-ānīka*, etc., Text, l.11). This indicates that elephantry was an important composite of Harsha's army.

Paucity of information in the epigraphical sources is compensated by that of literary sources. Hiuen Tsang observes: "The army is composed of Foot, Horse, Chariot, and Elephant soldiers."[113] This seems to indicate that the reference is to the four traditional limbs of the army *(chaturaṅgabala)* as known to him. For, in another place, referring to Harsha' s army, he tells us that, soon after Harsha became the king "he increased his army, bringing the elephant corps up to 60,000 and the cavalry to 100,000."[114] On this point Tripathi obseves: "It is significant that both Bāṇa and Yuan Chwang omit to make any mention of chariots in Harsha's army, although the latter authority speaks of the four traditional elements of the army in his general description".[115] At one place Bāṇa[116] refers to troops of camels *(kramēlaka-kula)*. But, as suggested by Devahuti,[117] they seem to have been used as beasts of burden. Bāṇa[118] refers to the king's favourite horses imported from Vanāyu, Āraṭṭa. Kambhōja, Bharadvāja, Sindh and Persia. This speaks of the careful attention bestowed on the cavalry.

It is again Bāṇa who mentions some military officials, at times along with their names. Thus, we come across *Balādhikṛita*,[119] *Pāṭṭpati*[120] (translated as a barrack superintendent), *Sēnāpati* Siṁhanāda,[121] *Mahāsandhivigrahādhikṛita* Avanti,[122] *Bṛihadaśvavāra* Kuntala,[123] *Gajasādhanādhikṛita* Skandagupta[124] and *Kaṭuka*.[125] This last mentioned term occurs also in the grant of Dyutivarman[126] assignable to the 6th century A.D.

Lastly, referring to the weapons, Hiuen-Tsang states: "..... they bear a large shield and carry a long spear; some are armed with a sword or sabre and dash to the front of the advancing line of battle. They are perfect experts with all the implements of war such as spears shield, bow and arrow, sword, sabre, etc., having been drilled in them for generations".[127]

(iii) Military System of the Maukharis and Varmans

The Maukhari families ruled as feudatory chiefs in south Bihar and Uttar Pradesh since the time of Budhagupta, and the decline of the power of the Imperial Guptas gave them an opportunity to assert their independence. Iśānavarman was the first Maukhari king to set up an independent kingdom and establish the power of the family. He assumed the title of *Mahārājādhirāja*.

We know very little about the military system of the Maukharis though they are known to have conquered the ruler of Āndhra who possessed thousands of rutting elephants, vanquished the Śūlikas who had an army of countless horses, and checked the power of the Gaudas living on the seashore as detailed in the Haṛāhā inscription.[128] From the Aphsad inscription[129] we learn that the Maukharis possessed hosts of elephants. This inscription refers to the elephant force of the Maukharis which crushed the Hūṇa troops (*Yō Maukharēḥ samitish-ūddhata-Hūṇa-sainyā-valgad-ghaṭā vighaṭayann=uru-vāraṇānāṁ*, (Text, ll.8-9). The dexterity in archery of Anantavarman, Ādityavarman and Iśānavarman is highly praised in the inscriptions. The Nāgārjuni Hill cave inscription[130] describes how Anantavarman's arrows played havoc in the elephantry and cavalry of his enemies causing immense grief to their wives (*atyākṛishṭāt-kurara-viruta-sparddhinaḥ śārṅga-yantrād-vēg-āviddhaḥ pravitata-guṇād=iritaḥ saushṭhavēna | dūra-prāpi vimathita-gaj-ōdbhrānta-vājī pravirō vāṇō=ri-strī-vyasana-padavī-dēśikō=Nanta-nāmnā (mna)ḥ ||* (Text, ll.7-8). The Jaunpur stone inscription[131] describes Ādityavarman as one whose prowess with the bow was displayed with all the energy of a man (*sakala-purusha-śakti-vyakta- śārṅga-pratāpō*, (Text, l.2). The Haṛāhā inscription referred to above states how Iśānavarman's shoulders were rendered rugged by wounds caused by the strokes of the bow-string (*jyāghāta-vraṇa-rūḍhi-karkkaśa-bhujā-vyākṛishṭa-śārṅga-chyutān=yasy=āvāpya patattriṇō raṇa-mukhē prāṇān=amuṅchan dvishaḥ |*, (Text l.15).

We know something about the military equipment of the rulers of Kāmarūpa. The Nidhanpur plates[132] of Bhāskaravarman, who was a friend and companion of Harsha, were issued from the camp located at Karṇasuvarṇa possessing splendid ships, elephants, horses and foot-soldiers (*mahā-nau-hasty-aśva-patti-saṁpatty-upētta-jaya-śabd-ānvartha-skandhāvārāt Karṇṇasuvarṇṇa-vāsakāt*, Text, ll.2-3). Thus, we come to know that the kings of Kāmarūpa possessed naval unit as an arm of their army in addition to the three classical wings. This is corroborated by Hiuen- Tsang[133] who states that on one occasion Bhāskaravanman proceeded with his army of elephants 20,000 in number, to meet Harsha at Kajaṅgala near Rājamahal, and his 30,000 ships passed along the Ganges to the same destination. We need not take the number of ships to be actual. But, this statement is important so far as it corroborates what we know from epigraphical sources. In this background we have every reason to support P.C. Chakravarti[134] who states that the Aphsad inscription probably contains a veiled reference to a naval victory won by Mahāsēna Gupta over the contemporary Kāmarūpa monarch Susthitavanman. We know that Susthitavarman was the father of Bhāskaravarman. Further, the Dūbi plates[135] of

Bhāskaravarman, describing a fight between the king of Gauḍa on the one hand and Bhāskaravarman and his brother Supratishṭhitavanman on the other, mention the following weapons: *Sāyaka* (arrow), *Śakti* (spear), *Chakra* (discus), *Kanaya* (a metallic rod), *Prāsa* (barbed dart), *Asi* (sword) and *Tōmara* (iron club). We have already come across some of these weapons in the Allahābād *praśasti*. Of all these weapons, the mention of *Chakra* and *Kanaya* is quite interesting because, this is, perhaps, the first epigraphical reference to these weapons as actually having been used in warfare so far as north Indian inscriptions are concerned. Kauṭilya[136] mentions both of them. Shama Sastry explains *Kanaya (Kaṇaya)* thus: "a metallic rod both ends of which are triangular. This is held in the middle and is 20, 22 or 24 inches long."[137] Another noteworthy fact in this inscription is the reference to the Gauḍa ruler as strong in naval warfare *(baliny=api jale*, Text, ll.94-95). The Harāhā inscription of Iśānavanman, referred to above, also describes the Gauḍas as living on the sea-shore or being protected by sea *(Gauḍān-samudr-āśrayān)*.

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39. V.A. Smith quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 46.
40. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I. pp. 435 ff.
41. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 11.
42. *Ibid.*, No. 20.
43. *Ibid.*, No. 28.
44. *Ibid.*, No. 31.
45. *MSAI.*, p. 84.
46. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 47.
47. *Apte.*, pp. 489-90.
48. See No. 41 above.
49. *IEG.*, p. 174.
50. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 3.
51. *Ibid.*, No. 21.

52. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No. 23, Text, l. 20.
53. *Ibid.*, No. 28, Text, l. 31; No. 30, Text, l.13.
54. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 340 ff.
55. *IEG.*, p. 183.
56. *ASIAR.*, 1911-12, pp. 52-53.
57. *Ibid.*, 1903-04, p. 109, No. 18.
58. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 303 ff.
59. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 115 ff.
60. *ASIAR.*, 1903-04, p. 108, No. 13.
61. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 98.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
63. D.C. Sircar in *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 305.
64. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No. 46.
65. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 16.
66. *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 193 ff.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 199 ff.
68. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 258.
69. *Ibid.* pp. 54 ff.
70. *Apte*, p. 1003.
71. *IEG.*, p. 161.
72. Bows and arrows, spear and swords, and spears and battle-axes, depicted on the Gupta coins, are illustrated in *IAA.*, pp. 97, 100 and 104 respectively.
73. John Allan, *CCGDS.*, p. 45, No. 121, plate IX. 14.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 74, No. 221, plate XIII. 12.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 135, No. 552, plate XXII. 2.
76. R.C. Majumdar, *CLAI.*, p. 28.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
78. *Pāṇini.*, V. 3. 114.
79. *KAS.*, pp. 342, 343, etc.
80. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 35.
81. This brief account has been adopted here from *AHS.*, pp. 21 ff.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
83. *KAS.*, pp. 342 ff.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 342.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 344.
86. See No. 80 above.
87. *KAS.*, p. 378.
88. *AHS.*, p. 149.
89. *HIG.*, Part I, P. 25, Text, l.10.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 56, Text, l.1.
91. *Ibid.*, p. 214, Text, ll.19-20.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 93, Text, l.2; p. 99, Text, l.3.
93. *Ep. , Ind.*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 152 ff., Text, l.2.
94. *PGP.*, p. 143.
95. *HIG.*, Part I. p. 214, Text, l.30.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 254, Text, l.31.
97. *Ibid.*, p. 268, Text, l.32; p. 279, Text, l.31.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 65, Text, l.1.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 92, Text, l.1.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 131, Text, l.1.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 65, Text, l.10; p. 71, Text, l.7.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 65, Text, l.16.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 146, Text, ll.1-2.
104. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 193, Text, l.39.
105. *PGP.*, p. 152.
106. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 184, n. 7.
107. *CA.*, p. 104.
108. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. X. pp. 100 ff. For other references see, *HHT.*, p. 176, n. 75.
109. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, pp. 208 ff.
110. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 67 ff.
111. K.K. Thaplyal, *IMLGPY.*, p. 105.
112. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VI, pp. 1 ff.

113. *Watters*, Vol. I, p. 171.
114. *Ibid.*, p. 343.
115. R.S. Tripathi, *HK.*, p. 131, n. 1.
116. *HC.*, p. 27.
117. D. Devahuti, *HPS.*, p. 191.
118. *HCCTH.*, p. 50.
119. *HK.*, p. 137.
120. *Ibid.*
121. *Ibid.*
122. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
123. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
124. *Ibid.*
125. *Ibid.*
126. D.C. Sircar, *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. II, pp. 217 ff., Text, l.5.
127. *Watters*, Vol. I, p. 171.
128. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIV, pp. 110 ff.
129. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III. No. 42.
130. *Ibid.*, No. 49.
131. *Ibid*, No.51.
132. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XII, pp. 65 ff.
133. *Life.*, p. 172.
134. *AWAI.*, p. 60.
135. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 287 ff.
136. *KAS.*, p. 101.
137. *KAST.*, p. 121.

CHAPTER III

JUDICIARY

Judiciary in the Mauryan Period

It is not possible to reconstruct a complete account of the judicial administration that prevailed under the Mauryan emperor Aśoka because, it is his all-pervasive and overwhelming *dharma* that dominates in his edicts and overshadows all other subjects including judicial administration. Yet Aśokan inscriptions furnish enough material to conclude that judicial administration was an important function of the State and that it received due attention. We do not come across, in the edicts of Aśoka, mention of various law-courts, legal procedures, types of crimes and punishments, etc., as detailed in the *smṛitis* and the *Arthaśāstra*. But whatever little can be known from the former is more than enough to visualise the sense of justice and human interest on the part of Aśoka.

Before taking up the discussion of the subject it is necessary to briefly dwell upon the concept of Indian Jurisprudence. The ancient Indian king was no law-maker. His function was to administer the law already established. The law of the land was the supreme authority in the matter of judiciary. This position is also borne out by the epigraphical source. Thus, for example, the Maitraka king Drōṇāsimha is described as the follower of the regulations laid down by Manu and others (*Manv-ādi-pranīta-vidhi-vidhāna-dharmā*).[1] The imprecatory statements, occurring at the end of the land grants, repeatedly quote the *smṛitis* for the serious nature of the sins attracted by the violation of such grants. It is needless to quote examples of the imprecatory verses which are well known. Right from the Gupta period onwards they are found in inscriptions. They clearly show that the sacred law was held in high regard by the rulers. Dikshitar[2] duly criticises Smith's view that Aśoka's Edicts were laws promulgated by the emperor in utter disregard of the sacred tradition. He avers that Aśoka simply enforced the regulations which had fallen into disuse by long and continual neglect. This statement implies that the law and order situation under the predecessors of Aśoka was not very sound. The creation of the posts of

Dharmamahāmātras and *Rājūkas* and the rejuvenation of the secret service by Aśoka lend support to this view.

It will be clear from the following discussion that Aśoka adopted the system of judicial administration described in the *Arthaśāstra*. Commenting on the two terms *śāsana* and *samaya* occurring in Aśoka's inscriptions and the penalty prescribed in the Minor pillar inscriptions at Sāñchi and Sārnāth[3] for infringing the monastic code, Dikshitar[4] states: "Thus *śāsana* and the *samaya* of the Edicts as well as the punishments mentioned correspond to those of the *Arthaśāstra* to which Aśoka was of course indebted."

We have already stated in Chapter I that *Rājūkas* were officials of a very high rank holding both civil and judicial powers. They figure in R.E. III, P.E. IV and VII. Of these records, it is P.E. IV that reveals the judicial powers and duties of *Rājūkas*. From this record we come to know, firstly, that the *Rājūkas* were appointed over many hundred thousands of people, secondly, that they were invested with the sole control of any reward or punishment so that they might perform their duties with confidence and without fear, and lastly, that they were advised to follow uniformity in legal procedures and punishments. Thus, it becomes evident that the *Rājūkas* were responsible for the judicial administration of a vast territorial unit and possessed judicial power of a very high degree. Obviously, there must have been a number of subordinate judicial officials working under the *Rājūkas*.

We have already discussed the status and duties of the *Nagaravyavahārika* appearing in the Separate Kaliṅga Edict I. They were the district town magistrates. If Thomas'[5] identification of *Prādēśika* of Aśoka's inscriptions with *Pradēshṭṛi* is accepted, we have another judicial official in him. Besides these officials, a class of *Mahāmātras* was entrusted with the duty of seeing that all the injunctions of the emperor for the proper adminstration of justice are carried out. Thus, in the Separate Kaliṅga Edict I[6] it is stated that *Mahāmātras* will be sent on tour for their regular duties and also for ascertaining that the emperor's instructions are properly carried out by the Judicial officers. Bhandarkar[7] holds that this duty of inspecting the judicial administration was assigned to the *Dharmamahāmātras*.

Arthaśāstra lists a number of offences and punishments. But no such details are available in Aśokan inscriptions. P.E. IV, which has been often referred to above, mentions punishment in general (*tāḷita-daṃḍānanṃ*), capital punishment (*patavadhānaṃ*) and arrests and prisons (*baṃdhanabadhānaṃ*). Mention of the capital punishment just referred to goes against the Buddhist tradition that Aśoka had abolished capital punishment altogether.[8]

It is true that the Aśokan inscriptions do not depict a clear and complete picture of the contemporary judicial administration. But Aśoka's concern for proper judicial administration and his sympathy for the unfortunate prisoners including those that were condemned to death, find very few parallels in the history of mankind. From P.E. IV we learn that the *Rājūkas* were invested with supreme judicial powers which

enabled them to perform their duties unperturbed and unsuspected. This clearly indicates that there was no scope for arbitrariness of any kind so far as judicial administration was concerned. From the same epigraph we come to know that a respite of three days was granted by Aśoka to the persons condemned to death so that either their relatives could persuade the *Rājūkas* to grant their life or they (the convicts) themselves could do some pious deeds. Bhandarkar,[9] not satisfied with the English translation of the expression *tiṃni divasāni me yote diṃne* occurring in this inscription,[10] as "a respite of three days," renders it as "three days as something rightfully and exclusively their own." Be that as it may, the fact that the relatives of a convict condemned to death could approach the *Rājūkas* and try to save the life of the former by convincing the latter even at the last moment and that the *Rājūkas* were empowered to revoke or lessen the punishment already awarded in the case of capital punishment, is important.

The two expressions *vyavahāra* and *samatā* occurring in the inscription just referred to, are clear proofs of Aśoka's efforts to bring about uniformity in legal procedure and penal code throughout his empire. The word *samatā* in this context has been rendered as "impartiality" by Hultzsch.[11] But Bhandarkar[12] takes it to mean uniformity. Similarly, the word *vyavahāra* is rendered by the former scholar[13] as "Judicial Proceedings," whereas the latter[14] translates it as 'administrations'. The juxtaposition of the words *vyavahāra* and *daṃḍa* (punishment) leads us to accept the first interpretation.

Aśoka was well aware of the possible illtreatment of prisoners at the hands of jail officials. Therefore, in the Separate Kaliliga Edict I, he warns the *Nagaravyavahārikas* to avoid unjustifiable arrests of men and undue harsh treatment of prisoners. He traces these defects to dispositions like envy, anger, cruelty, etc., and advises the judicial officials not to allow these feelings to overpower them, but to inculcate qualities like patience, perseverance, etc., so that they may discharge their debt to the king.

While discussing the civil administration under Aśoka we have stated that one of the functions of the *Dharmamahāmātras* was to look after the welfare of the prisoners. R.E.V states that the *Dharmamahāmātras* were engaged in financially supporting the helpless families of prisoners and in arranging for the release of those who committed crimes under the instigation of others, and of those who were aged.

Lastly, in P.E. V it is stated that during the 26 years since his coronation Aśoka had ordered the release of prisoners twentyfive times. Kauṭilya[15] mentions a number of occasions on which prisoners were usually set free. These occasions were, the conquest of a new country , the coronation of an heir-apparent, and the birth of a prince to the king (*apūrva-dēś-ādhigamē Yuvarāj-ābhishēchanē putra-janmani vā mōkshō bandhanasya vidhiyate* | |). We do not know on which important occasions Aśoka ordered the annual release of prisoners.

Judiciary in the post-Mauryan Period

Once again we are baffled by paucity of information with regard to judicial administration when we come to the post-Mauryan period. Epigraphical references to this subject during this period are few and far between. But still it is possible to have some idea of the judiciary and of law and order.

We have already referred to the term *rājūka* occurring in an inscription of the 2nd-3rd century B.C., from Sāñchu.[16] We have also discussed the functions of this official in the administrative set up of Aśoka. On the analogy of the judicial functions assigned to the *Rājūka* in the time of Aśoka, it is possible to hold that the *Rājūka* of the Sāñchi inscription too performed certain judicial functions. Of course, there is no such indication in the inscription. But we have to consider two factors in this connection. Firstly, the reign of the Śuṅga kings is not far removed chronologically from the Aśokan inscriptions, and secondly, we have earlier noted that the administrative pattern of the Śuṅgas did not differ much from that of Aśoka.

We have also referred to the designation *Nagara akhadaṁsa* occurring in an inscription[17] from the caves of Udayagiri and Khaṇḍagiri in Orissa and pertaining to the Chēdi dynasty. Das[18] takes this official as Town Superintendent or Inspector of Dice-playing (i.e., gambling), rejecting Barua's interpretation of the term as 'Town judge'. He seems to equate *Nagara akhadaṁsa* with the Superintendent of gambling of the *Arthaśāstra*. It may be noted that not only Barua but also Lüders and Banerji[19] take this word to stand for Town judge. Further, the term that denotes the Superintendent of gambling in the *Arthaśāstra* is *dyūtādhyaksha*,[20] which has the least resemblance with the term *nagara akhadaṁsa* under discussion. However, Apte[21] gives both the meanings of a judge and a superintendent of gambling for the expression *aksha-darśaka* which is the Sanskrit equivalent of Pāli *akhadaṁsa*.

Perhaps the only clear reference to a City Police Officer *(Nagararakshin)* during this period is found in the Kirāṛi inscription of about the second century A.D.[22]

The Hāthigumphā inscription[23] of Khāravela furnishes a list of subjects, studied by him (*tato lekho-rūpa-gaṇanā-vavahāra-vidhi-visāradena savavijāvadātena*, Text, l.2). Of these subjects we are concerned at present with the terms *vavahāra (vyavahāra)* and *vidhi*. These terms have been rendered by Jayaswal and Banerji[24] as civil and religious laws. They comment on these terms thus: " *Vavahāra- Vyavahāra* meaning Civil Law or Municipal Law as opposed to *Vidhi* or Religious Law which is mentioned in Sanskrit legal literature as positive injunctions."[25] Kauṭilya uses the term in various senses, chiefly as a technical term to denote some legal aspect. Thus, in the expression *vivāha-pūrvō vyavahāraḥ*[26] (marriage is the basis of dispute), *vyavahāra* means a dispute. Similarly, in the passage *Dharmasthāḥ .....Vyāvahārikānarthān kuryuḥ*[27], *vyavahāra* means administration of justice. We have already discussed the terms *vyavahāra* and *nagaravyavahārika*, occurring in Aśoka's inscriptions in judicial contexts. Kane[28] defines the term *vyavahāra* as 'law- suit or dispute in a court' and 'legal procedure'. The term *vidhi* denotes a method or mode in general in the expression *ētēna vidhinā.....kārayēt*,[29] and rules or regulations in the expression *śāsanasya - vidhiḥ*.[30] Thus, the occurrence of the terms *vyavahāra* and *vidhi* in the Hāthigumphā inscription is significant so far as it attests to the prevalence of some kind of judicial administration under the rule of Khāravela.

This inscription also refers to the terms *paura* and *jānapada*. Jayaswal[31] has discussed these terms at length and, in the translation of this record, rendered them as the City-corporation and the Realm-corporation[32] respectively. Of these corporate bodies the first one is relevant here as it is stated to have performed some judicial functions. Enumerating the non-political functions of the *Paura* which are mentioned in the law books, Jayaswal[33] explains its "judicial work, which must have been limited to the matter of municipal adminstration." He further states: "Criminal authority proper, i.e., in cases of the *Sāhasa* (violence) class, is expressly exempted from the jurisdiction of the Paura court. According to an authority quoted by Mitramiśra, probably Bhrigu, as well as others, the Paura Court was an institution recognised by the king." Further, it may be noted that the interpretation of the terms *jānapada* and *paura* by Jayaswal[34] is mainly based on Khāravela's inscription. Therefore, it becomes evident that the City-corporation *(Paura)* functioned as a judicial institution with its limited jurisdiction under the reign of Khāravela.

The terms *vyavahāra, paura* and *jānapada* also occur in the Junāgaḍh inscription of Rudradāman.[35] Kielhorn[36] renders them as proper dealings, inhabitants of towns and inhabitants of country respectively. But Jayaswal[37] takes the last two terms to mean the same as in the case of Khāravela's inscription. So far as the term *vyavahāra* is concerned, its juxtaposition with *artha, dharma* and *darśana* (*Yathāvad=artha-dharma-vyavahāra-darśanair=anugraham=abhivaraddhayatā*, Text, l.19) would suggest for it a technical sense rather than the ordinary meaning of 'Proper dealings' in this context. Therefore, on the analogy of its sense in Khāravela's inscription, we may take it to mean judicial administration.

We have a reference to robbers in Rudradaman's inscription. Perhaps this is the earliest occurrence of this anti-social element in the North Indian inscriptions in general. In ll.10-11 of this inscription there is a passage *dasyu-vyāla-mṛiga-rōg-ādibhir=anupasṛishṭapūrvva-nagara-nigama-janapadānāṁ* .....etc. Even though there is some difficulty in interpreting the expression *anupasṛishṭapūrvva*, contextually the passage can be properly understood. Kielhom renders the passage thus : "the towns, marts and rural parts of which are never troubled by robbers, snakes, wild beasts, diseases and the like."[38] This clearly indicates that crimes were effectively checked under the rule of Rudradāman. We have already stated in the second chapter something about the antiquity of guilds and their role in the polity of ancient India. Their field of activity was not restricted to polity alone, but it also included the socio-economic and religious spheres of life. But what is important is that these corporate bodies bore the responsibility of the judicial administration though only to a limited extent.

Now let us discuss the epigraphical references to the guilds. One of the inscriptions[39] on *stūpa* No. I at Sāñchi reads: *Vedisakehi daṁtakārehi rūpakaṁmaṁ kataṁ* (The ivory workers of Vedisa have done the carving). The plural number of the ivory workers is significant here. Commenting on this epigraph, Bühler[40] writes : "The collective gift of the *Vedisakā daṁtakārā*, or workers in ivory of Vedisa, I.C., 189, probably indicates that these artisans formed a guild, or *śrēṇi*, such as the Nāsik inscriptions mention repeatedly". Though there is no word in this inscription to denote a *Śrēṇi* or guild, we may reasonably hold that guilds prospered under the Śuṅga rule. As rightly pointed out by Majumdar[41] "Perhaps the oldest epigraphic reference to guild is furnished by an inscription of Huvishka at Mathura, dated in the year 28 (c. 106 A.D.)." Lines 12 and 13 of this record[42] read: ..... *[r]āka-śrēṇyē purāṇa-śata 500 50 samitakara-śrēṇi(yē cha*) purāṇa-śata 500 50.*

This inscription purports to record the institution of an *akshaya-nīvī* (perpetual endowment) by entrusting 550 *purāṇas* each to two guilds, one of which was that of flour makers *(Samitakara)*. What is relevant here is the prevalence of guilds in the age of the Kushāṇas.

An inscription[43] in a cave at Nāsik, dated in the years 41, 42 and 45 (=A.D. 119, 120 and 123), recording the donation of 3000 *kārshāpaṇas* by Ushavadāta, son-in-law of the Śaka chief Nahapāna, refers to the two *Śrēṇis* of weavers *(kaulikanikāya)* stationed at Gōvarddhana. Thus, it becomes evident that *Śrēṇis* played an important role in the socio-economic life under the Śuṅgas, Kushāṇas and the Kshatrapas in the post-Mauryan period. Though the evidence produced in this respect is too meagre, it certainly testifies the prosperous state of the *Śrēṇis* during the period under consideration.

Now to resume the subject of judicial administration, Altekar[44] states that there were a number of popular courts in ancient Indian polity, which constituted one of its special features. By the expression popular courts he refers to the non-official courts like the *Śrēṇis* and others. He traces the antiquity of these courts to the Vedic age and explains that they survived even in the highly centralised polity of the *Arthaśāstra*.[45] But the *Śrēṇis* in the *Arthaśāstra* have not been assigned judicial functions. The three types of popular courts *viz., Pūga, Śrēṇi* and *Kula*, are for the first time mentioned in the *Yājñavalkya-smṛiti*, which according to Kane,[46] was composed between the period of 100 A.D. to 300 A.D. It may be noted that, of the three inscriptions referred to above, two belong to this period. We may also note that Altekar[47] holds that, though mentioned for the first time by *Yājñavalkya*, the *Śrēṇi* court might well be placed a few centuries earlier. Thus, it may be safely concluded that guilds of merchants, artisans, etc., called the *Śrēṇis* carried on judicial administration in their capacity of popular courts, in the post-Mauryan period.

The *Śrēṇi* court occupied a middle position between the *Kula and Pūga*, which were of lower and higher grades respectively (*Nṛipēṇ=ādhikritāḥ pūgā śrēṇayō=tha kulāni cha । pūrvaṁ pūrvaṁ guru jñēyam vyavahāra-vidhau nṛiṇām ।।*).[48] *Mitākharā* defines *Śrēṇi* as the

Corporation of persons following the same craft or profession though of different castes (*Śrēṇayō nānā-jātīnām=ēka- jātīya-karmi-ōpajīvinām saṁghātāḥ*).[49] It is quite natural and also suggested in the *smṛitis* that these popular courts possessed considerable executive and judicial authority over their members. But their judicial authority was not restricted to their members alone. The very gradation of these courts mentioned above suggests that their authority in matters judicial extended beyond their members and covered the general public. Writing about the *Śrēṇi* which he refers to by the word guild, Majumdar[50] states: "The chapter (in Bṛihaspati) in which these passages occur deals generally with the constitution of the court of justice and there is nothing to show that the judicial functions of the guild (*Śrēṇi*) noticed here related to its members alone or simply with reference to its own proper business. The very fact that Bṛihaspati has noticed these latter functions separately in a later chapter, seems to prove that, in the passages quoted above, reference is made to the guilds as ordinary courts of law. The exception noticed in verse 28, *viz.*, causes concerning violent crimes, also proves that the writer had in view only the ordinary courts of justice". Thus, it becomes evident that the *Śrēṇi* in the capacity of a popular court, heard and decided the law suits of its members and the general public as well, excepting causes concerning violent crimes (*sāhasa*).

There is no clear reference to judges in the epigraphs of this period. By clear reference we mean a reference which by its context can specify the judicial functions of an official or a term denoting a judicial official beyond doubt. However, we have a much discussed official called *Daṇḍanāyaka* who figures for the first time in the Kushāṇa epigraphs and who is concerned with many aspects of ancient Indian polity. Since we are already well acquainted with him, here we may just refer to his judicial functions. Chattopadhyay[51] discussing the functions of this official at length, states, at one place, that the term *Daṇḍanāyaka* may have originally represented an official-in-charge of administration of punishment *(Daṇḍa)*, and held responsible for maintenance of law and order in the conquered territories. At another place[52] he writes: "It seems reasonable to assume that the Daṇḍanāyakas and Mahādaṇḍanāyakas, the two grades of officials, discharged their functions as General, Judge or Police-Officer and some times as military governor."

It seems that there was an official solely connected with judiciary under the Kushāṇa administration. We are not sure of this, because two great epigraphists differently interpret a word occurring in the Mathurā inscription of the time of Kanishka, dated in the year 23, on which the above statement is based. In the first line of this inscription Chhabra[53] reads a word, the first and the last letters of which are somewhat damaged, as *mahārasya* and suggests that it stands for *mahārāja*.[54] But Sircar[55] reads this word as *Vahārisya* and states that the intended reading seems to be *Vohārisya*= Sanskrit *Vyavahāriṇaḥ=vyavahārikasya*, i.e., of the magistrate.[56] A comparison of the first letter of the word under discussion with the form of the letter *va* in *purvayaṁ* in the same line[57] convinces us to accept Sircar's reading. Further, the sign for *i* above the letter *ra* in the word under discussion remains unexplained if it is read as *mahārasya*. As regards the

last letter it is difficult to accept or reject either of the readings. But it makes no difference so far as the sense of the word is concerned. Thus, following Sircar, we may conclude that there was the post of the *Vohāri* (*Vohārika*=magistrate) to attend to judicial administration under the Kushāṇa rule.

Perhaps no other Sanskrit drama depicts such a vivid picture of contemporary society like the *Mṛichchhakaṭika* of Śūdraka. Its value in understanding the various aspects of cultural life cannot be exaggerated. But the difficulty in utilising it as a literary source for reconstructing cultural history lies in the fact that scholars hold divergent views regarding its date. Kale[58] critically examines these views and assigns a probable date of 200 B.C. to this work basing on its internal evidences. Jayaswal[59] regards this work as the product of the third century A.D. Dikshitar[60] adopts the same date. It is out of place here to discuss the validity of either of these dates. But we may note that they mark the beginning and the terminal dates of the period with which we are concerned at present.

This work has been brought in here as it contains valuable information regarding contemporary judicial administration, which we quote hereunder from Kale's introduction to it. Describing the state of society depicted in this play, Kale[61] writes: "The ninth Act gives us special insight into the judicial administration. The judge was assisted by two assessors, and the justice appears to have been both impartial and speedy; the presiding judge had to follow well-formulated rules of evidence and procedure in recording facts and examining witnesses; but he could give his decision only in the form of a recommendation, the passing of the final orders lying with the sovereign. If the facts were not clearly established by the evidence, recourse was to be had to four kinds of ordeals, a trial by ordeal being fairly common in ancient society for serious offences. The person under trial had to confess his crime when proved by facts. A criminal punished capitally could be set free if an adequate ransom was paid or some great event happened. The executioners had some discretionary powers; they could release a prisoner if found innocent and even punish the real offender. A creditor had absolute power over the person of his debtor; he could inflict bodily punishment on him with impunity, or even sell him for the recovery of his money. The officers of the king seem to have been zealous in the performance of their duties; Viraka and Chandanaka pursue the escaped prisoner with as much vigour and promptitude as though it was an affair in which they were personally concerned; and although in the end Chandanaka proves a traitor to his employer, it was not due to bribery or cowardice, but to an appeal to his innate sense of compassion for one wrongfully oppressed."

Judiciary of the Guptas

As in many other fields of life, the Gupta period is marked by tremendous progress in the field of law and justice in early India. A rich corpus of legal literature produced in this period reflects a distinct advance in the legal system. The three great works of

this period are the *smṛitis* of Bṛihaspati, Nārada and Kātyāyana. Bṛihaspati enumerates eighteen titles of law and adds that fourteen of these have their origin in property *(dhana-mūla)* and four in injury *(himsā-mūla)* : *dvi-padō-vyavahāraḥ syād=dhana-hiṁsā-sam=udbhavaḥ | dvi-saptakō=rtha-mūlas=tu hiṁsā-mūlaś-chatur- vidhaḥ* ||.[62] As stated by Ghoshal,[63] "this classification is an important landmark in the history of Hindu Law, for it implies the first clear recognition of the division between civil and criminal law." Referring to the legal literature of this period, the same scholar[64] writes : "We may describe the change by stating that the constructive phase of Hindu Law was passing away and its critical phase was about to begin."

It will be disillusioning to expect the legal procedures, as detailed in the *smṛitis* referred to above, to find a mention in the Gupta inscriptions. But, however, the latter furnish adequate information for us to draw a clear picture of an efficient judicial administration and a state of law and order conducive to peace and prosperity. We come to know about the different bodies that decided the law suits, a number of designations of the judicial and police officials and something of the crime and punishment, from the epigraphs of this period.

Earlier in Chapter I it is explained how the District Town Board of Kōṭivarsha was constituted of five members, four of whom, *viz.*, the *Nagaraśrēshṭhi*, the *Sārthavāha*, the *Prathamakulika* and the *Prathamakāyastha*, represented the different classes of people in the society. It was also suggested that this Board would not have functioned only as an agency engaged in the sale of government land. Now, Act IX of *Mṛichchhakaṭika*[65] presents a trial scene wherein a *Śrēshṭhin* and a *Kāyastha* are found associated with a judge (*Adhikaraṇa*). All the three together are called *Adhikaraṇabhōjakāḥ* which is a clear indication of the active role of the *Śrēshṭhin* and the *Kāyastha* in hearing and deciding law suits. Here and in the *Harshacharita* the term *adhikaraṇa* is used in the sense of a court. It may be noted that one of the primary meanings of the word *adhikaraṇa* is also court of justice. Therefore, the term *adhishṭhān-ādhikaraṇa* also denotes a court of justice situated in a town, though earlier we have taken the word *adhikaraṇa* to mean an office in general. Therefore, it is reasonable to hold with Bhandarkar[66] that the District Town Board (*Adhishṭhān-ādhikaraṇa*) functioned as a local court in settling disputes at the town level.

We have also referred earlier to the *Aṣhṭakul-ādhikaraṇa* or the village Administrative Board of eight members, occurring in the Dāmōdarpur records. Here again Bhandarkar[67] holds that this Board had power to settle disputes. He identifies *Aṣhṭakul-ādhikaraṇa* under discussion with the *Aṣhṭakulikas* of the Buddhist commentaries, who were endowed with power to try criminal cases under the Vajjian constitution. Altekar[68] also holds that one of the functions of the village council *(Janapada)* in the Gupta period was to settle village disputes.

One of the Basāḍh seals,[69] belonging to the Gupta age reads thus: *Dharmāsanādhikaraṇasya*, which has been interpreted to mean 'the seal of the office of the

Chief Justice'. Saletore[70] compares the term *dharmāsana* occurring here with *dharmāsana* of the *Mālavikāgnimitram* and *dharmādhikāra* of *Śākuntalam* of Kālidāsa and *dharmasthāna* of the Vākāṭaka grants. His discussion is interesting. Here we may quote his conclusions. He states : "From this comparison three important conclusions may be drawn : first, that the *Dharmāsana* mentioned by Kālidāsa and the Vaiśāli seal must have been one and the same; secondly, that the *Dharmādhikāra* mentioned by Kālidāsa as having been the officer entrusted with the maintenance of the law in the town, must have been according to the Gupta seal the same officer although he is styled as the *Dharmāsanādhikaraṇa;* thirdly, he appears to have had an office or, as has been interpreted in this work, a court *(adhikaraṇa)* wherein he administered justice and stamped documents. It would not be far fetched to identify the *Dharmāsana* of the Gupta seals and the plays of Kālidāsa with the *Dharmasthāna* of the Vākāṭaka inscriptions, which must have been the seat of justice in Gupta times. Probably there existed this rather vital difference between the Gupta *Dharmāsana* and the Vākāṭaka *Dharmasthāna;* the former was possibly in the Gupta empire the court of the *Dharmādhikāra,* while the latter in the Vākāṭaka empire was what the *Adhikaraṇa* was in the Gupta empire merely a civil and criminal court wherein land disputes were also settled."

We have earlier stated how the guilds of merchants and artisans functioned as popular courts in the post-Mauryan period. The Gupta epigraphs and seals also mention these guilds. The guild of silk-weavers at Daśapura is well-known. A guild of oil-men *(tailika-śrēṇi)* is referred to in the Indōr copper-plate inscription[71] of Skandagupta. Besides these, a number of seals from Basāḍh[72] belonging to the Gupta period refer to the guilds *(Nigama)* of bankers *(Śrēshṭhin),* traders *(Sārthavāha)* and artisans *(Kulika).* Thus, it becomes evident that the guilds were very active in the Gupta period. It is reasonable to think that as in the post-Mauryan period the guilds functioned as popular courts in the Gupta period also. Though *Nigama* is not mentioned as a popular court in the *smṛitis* its similarity with *śrēṇi* in economic and religious activities enables us to hold that, like the latter, it too functioned as a popular court.

Now we will pass on to the judicial and police officials figuring in the Gupta records. The seals discovered at Nālandā and Basāḍh furnish two terms denoting a judge. Thus, the Nālandā seal[73] reads: *Śrī-Śīlāditya-Dharmm-ādhikaraṇ[ē].* The seal[74] from Basāḍh reads: *Dharmmāsan-ādhikaraṇasya.* Even if we take the *adhikaraṇa* occurring in these instances to mean a Law Court, we have indirect reference to the judges who conducted proceedings in these courts.

The Talēśvara copper-plate inscription[75] of Dyutivarman, which is assigned by Sircar to the 6th century A.D. on palaeographical grounds, mentions an official called *Pramātāra.* This official, also figuring in the records of the Maitrakas and Harsha, might have been a judge as discussed earlier in Chapter I.

Daṇḍanāyaka seems to have headed the *Daṇḍa* class of officials, if we are permitted to use this expression. For, besides *Daṇḍanāyaka,* there were three other officials closely

associated with *Daṇḍa, viz., Dāṇḍika, Dāṇḍapāśika* and *Daṇḍōparika.* There is no doubt that these officials belonged to the police department, because at least in one case, *viz., Dāṇḍapāśika, daṇḍa* means a rod, and also because often these officials are found juxtaposed in inscriptions. Thus, for exmaple, *Dāṇḍika* is immediately followed by *Dāṇḍapāsika* in the Dēō-Barṇārk inscription[76] of Jivitagupta II. This same order is also found in the Kalāchchalā grant[77] of Iśvararāta of the 4th century A.D.

We refrain from discussing here the officials *Daṇḍanāyaka, Dāṇḍika, Dāṇḍapāsika* and *Chauröddharaṇika,* the last of whom also belongs to the *Daṇḍa* class, as we have already explained these terms. But, we may note that *Dāṇḍapāśika* seems to have been superior to *Dāṇḍika* as the former had an office of his own as can be known from the Basāḍh seal[78] reading *Dāṇḍapāś-ādhikaraṇasya.* Another official of this very class, figuring in the Talēśvara copper-plate inscription[79] of Dyutivarman referred to above, is *Daṇḍōparika.* He too seems to have been a police official of high rank. For, significantly he figures first in the list of officials addressed by the king and the *Dāṇḍapāśika* is the last but one. Another police official called *Ārakshika (Ārakshaka)* is met with in the Sunāo Kala plates[80] of Saṁgrāmasiṁha, belonging to 540-41 A.D. *Chāṭa* and *Bhaṭa* also seem to belong to the police department in the Gupta period, though these terms have been interpreted variously. The Surat plates[81] of Vyāghrasēna, issued in 490-91 A.D., furnish a very clinching evidence regarding the functions of these two officials. Lines 10 and 11 of this record read thus : *iyam pallikā chōra-rāj-āpathya- kāri-varjjam a-chāṭa-bhaṭa-prāvēśyā.* It means that the hamlet granted to the Brāhmaṇas should not be entered by the *Chāṭa* and *Bhaṭa* unless (in order to arrest) robbers or persons guilty of high-treason. A similar passage occurs also in l.17 of the Betul plates[82] of Saṁkshōbha, belonging to 518-19 A.D. Thus, it becomes evident that these two officials, obviously of the lowest rank, directly dealt with the anti-social elements like robbers and others. It may be noted that in the epigraphs of this as well as subsequent periods the *Chāṭa* and *Bhaṭa* are specifically prohibited from entering the lands and villages granted by kings and royal officials. Therefore, it may be safely held that these two officials were in the habit of misusing their powers and harassing the donees or the peasants who cultivated the donated lands. This is also borne out by the evidence of the *smṛitis.*[83] These two officials also figure in the two Sorsō plates[84] of Sōmadatta assigned to the 6th Century A.D.

We come to know very little about crime and punishment from the epigraphs of this period. Delinquency being the innate nature of the human personality, the Gupta age makes no exception for the prevalence of crimes like theft and robbery which are mentioned in the epigraphs of this period. We have already seen how the *Chāṭa and Bhaṭa* were allowed to enter a grant village to arrest the robbers. It seems that robbery was a burning problem in the daily life of the people in the countryside, and that the government spent a lot of money to check it. For, we have evidence to show that in the Gupta period a cess called *Chōra-daṇḍa* was levied from the villagers to keep them safe from the robbers. Thus, the Sohāwal copper-plate inscription[85] of *Mahārāja* Śarvanātha,

issued in 510-11 A.D. reads: *s-ōdraṅgaḥ s-ōparikaraḥ a-chāṭa-bhaṭa-prāvēśyaḥ halikā-kara-samētaḥ chōra-daṇḍa-varjjitaḥ* (Text, ll.9-10); and the Bamhani plates[86] of the Pāṇḍava king Bharatabala, assignable to the 5th century A.D., read: *s-ōdraṅgaḥ s-ōparikaraḥ a-chāṭa-bhaṭa-pravēśi sa-nidhiḥ s-ōpanidhiś-chōradaṇḍa-varja(i)ta*, (Text, ll.37-38). In both these instances the expression *chōra-daṇḍa* has been rendered by scholars as a fine imposed on thieves. We feel that this rendering is not satisfactory .The mention of *Chāṭa* and *Bhaṭa* in this context seems to have misled these scholars. What is significant in the passages quoted above is the fact that the expression *chōra-daṇḍa* is juxtaposed either with a previlage of a donee or a tax, which are often mixed up. Thus, in the above two instances this expression immediately follows *halikā-kara* and *upanidhi* respectively. It is also to be noted that in these instances the *Chōradaṇḍa* is specifically denied to donees while some other taxes and previleges were granted to them. Naturally the State could not afford to loose its income of *Chōradaṇḍa* which it intended to utilise to save the villages from robbers. Thus, the juxtaposition of *Chōradaṇḍa* with other taxes and its specific denial to the donees in contrast to the conferment of certain other taxes, prove beyond doubt that the *Chōrdaṇḍa* was a tax imposed on villages, obviously for incurring expenses to protect them against robbers.

At this stage we may note Fa-hien's observation regarding crime and punishment in the Gupta age. Speaking of the Middle Kingdom, the dominions of Chandragupta II in the Upper Ganges Valley, the Chinese pilgrim[87] says: "The king governs without decapitation or (other) corporal punishments. Criminals are simply fined, lightly or heavily, according to the circumstances (of each case). Even in cases of repeated attempts at wicked rebellion, they only have their right hands cut off." It is not possible to verify this statement with the help of epigraphical sources. However, the latter prove the existence of torture as a means of punishment. Thus, the Junāgaḍh inscription[88] of Skandagupta states that during his reign none was severely chastised with a cudgel (*Tasmin= nṛipē śāsati n= aiva kaśchid .....daṇḍēna vā yō bhri(ri)śa-piḍitaḥ syāt*, ll.5-6). Commenting on this passage Saletore[89] writes "..... during his reign torture as a means of punishment certainly existed, but it was not obviously carried to excess. This allusion to the infliction of torture probably implies that, in the reigns of his predecessors Kumāra Gupta or Chandra Gupta II, it was often stringently enforced, though of course we have no means of verifying such a statement."

Judiciary in the post-Gupta Period

As in the case of military administration, the Maitraka charters have not much to say about Judicial administration. The Judicial system of the Gupta period seems to have continued under the Maitrakas too. No new features are noticed in this field. For the sake of convenience we treat the few records of the Gārulakas and the Gurjaras along with those of the Maitrakas. The Gārulakas were the feudatories of the Maitrakas, and the Gurjaras, a small power in their neighbourhood. The charter

of Vishṇushēṇa, whom Sircar[90] takes to have been related to the Maitrakas, is also dealt with here.

We have earlier noted that some important *smṛitis* that guided the subsequent course of judicial system were produced in the Gupta period. But we have no references to these works in the Gupta records. For the first time we come across reference to the *smṛitis* in the Maitraka grants. Thus, king Drōṇasiṁha is described as *Manv-ādi-praṇīta-vidhi-vidhāna-dharmmā* (whose nature manifested itself in the observance of the regulations laid down by Manu and others, Text, l.7) in the Palitānā plates[91] of Dhruvasēna I and other Maitraka records. Similarly, Guhasēna is described as *sakala-smṛiti-mārgga-samyak-paripālana-prajā-hṛidaya-ramjan-ānvarttha-rāja-śabdaḥ* (who rendered his title of king appropriate by pleasing the minds of his subjects by thoroughly observing the conduct laid down in all smṛitis, Text, ll.5-6) in the Palitānā plates[92] of Śīlāditya I and other records. Such a description is also found in the Prince of Wales Museum plates[93] wherein king Dadda is styled *mahāmuni-Manupraṇīta-pravachan -ādhigama-vivēka-svadharmm-ānushṭhāna-pravaṇi(ṇō)*. Thus, it becomes evident that the *smṛitis* were held in high respect, by the Maitraka and Gurjara rulers. Therefore, it is reasonable to think that the *smṛitis* must have played a dominant role in the judicial administration of the period under discussion. We have evidence to show that local customs were also respected by rulers in judicial affairs. Thus, the charter of Vishṇushēṇa, which we will discuss shortly, consists of a long list of regulations which, according to Sircar, look like prevalent customary laws without much modification. At the end of the record the king says that, in addition to the *āchāras* (i.e., the regulations listed in the inscription) he also approved of the *āchāras* that were handed down from ancient times. This is a very clear proof of the importance attached to the customary laws in this period. Here we may quote another relevant expression from a Maitraka record. In a grant[94] of Dhruvasēna I there occurs the expression *Pūrvvāchāra-sthityā-pratipāditaḥ* (Text, ll.18-19) with reference to the grant of a village to the Brāhmaṇas. Vats[95] suggests, on the basis of this and another expression occuring in the same record that, it (the record under discussion) confirms a previous grant. But, so far as the expression *pūrvvāchāra-sthityā* is concerned, we think that it suggests how traditional customs were taken into consideration in the granting of lands or villages.

Many officials figuring in the Maitraka grants belong to the police department. Thus, *Dāṇḍapāśika*, *Dāṇḍabhōgika*, *Chaurōddharaṇika*, *Daśāparādhika*, *Avalōkki*, *Chāṭa* and *Bhaṭa* were the officials responsible for maintaining law and order throughout the kingdom. Of these officials, *Dāṇḍabhōgika*, *Daśāparādhika* and *Avalōkki* figure for the first time in the Maitraka records. The *Dāṇḍabhōgika* has been rightly identified with *Dāṇḍapāśika* by Sircar,[96] because these two officials do not figure simultaneously in the Maitraka grants. To our knowledge the only Maitraka grant wherein *Dāṇḍabhōgika* figures is the Wala plate[97] of Guhasēna, dated the year 246 (566 A.D.), and *Dāṇḍapāśika* is significantly

missing in this grant. The *Daśāparādhika* dealt with the ten kinds of offences and fined persons found guilty of any of them. As stated by Sircar[98] he seems to have been a judge rather than a police official. The expression *daśāparādha* seems to have had a more comprehensive sense beyond the traditional list of ten offences. For, it is difficult to make an exhaustive list of offences that man can commit. We have earlier explained that the *Avalōkki* might have been a detective or an intelligence officer. It may be noted that the *Daṇḍanāyaka* is missing from the list of officials in the Maitraka grants, though one of the five titles of Dhruvasēna I was *Mahādaṇḍanāyaka*.

We have already discussed about the official called *Pramātṛi* figuring in the Maitraka grants, whom we take as a judge. Besides the Talēśvara copper-plate inscription of Dyutivarman and the two grants of Harsha, this official also figures in the grant[99] of Bhāvihita of the early Guhilas.

Judging from the number of officials engaged in the task of maintaining law and order and also from the epithet *praj-ōpaghātakāriṇām=upaplavānāṁ darśayitā* (who was a remover of calamities that might oppress his subjects, Text, l.2) of Dharasēna I,[100] we may safely hold that law and order was satisfactorily maintained under the Maitrakas.

Now we may summarise the contents of the charter[101] of Viṣṇushēṇa, bearing dates corresponding to 592 and 602 A.D. As has been stated earlier, Sircar[102] holds that this ruler was related to the Maitrakas, and points to certain features common both to the Maitraka grants and to the charter of Vishṇushēṇa. It is worthwhile to note the occasion for issuing this charter as it forms an important source of economic and judicial history of ancient Saurāshṭra.

The inscription says that Vishṇushēṇa had been approached by a community of merchants, with a request for being favoured with the ruler's *āchārasthiti-pātra* which they might utilise in protecting their own people in his dominions and that the ruler actually obliged them. This *sthiti-pātra* is, in fact, a long list of regulations which look like prevalent customary laws without much modification. At the end, the king Vishṇushēṇa further says that, in addition to the *āchāras* quoted, he also approved of other *āchāras* that were handed down from ancient times. He ends with the request that his *anugrahasthiti-pātra* should be endorsed and followed by the future rulers of the country.

This charter consists of as many as seventy-two regulations, one of which pertains to property, five to the conduct of the royal officials, sixteen to the judicial procedure, ten to different types of crimes and fines prescribed for them, three to land disputes, two to allocation of different quarters to and payment of a share by trade guilds, twenty three to various taxes, two to the working of store houses, four to free labour, four to offerings to the king and two to distillers and measurers of wine.

Though this charter keeps the merchant class in its view, a good number of regulations cover the general public as well. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to consider all the seventy two regulations of this charter. Therefore, we may briefly

notice only those which are relevant here. The first regulation reads: *Āputrakaṁ na grāhyaṁ*. It seems to state that the property belonging to a person who died without leaving a son should not be confiscated by royal officials disregarding the claim of any legal heir other than the son.

Regulations 2, 5, 10, 11 and 63 pertain to the conduct of the royal officials. No. 2 states that the royal officials should not break open or violate the *unmara* which may refer to the threshold or door of a house. No. 5 states that the wife should not be apprehended for her husband's guilt. No. 10, reading *Gō-śakaṭaṁ na grāhyaṁ*, seems to be related to No. 11 which states that when a subordinate chief, an officer or an envoy of the king came to a village, the inhabitants thereof should not be compelled to supply beds or couches, seats and boiled rice. No. 10 would mean, in that case, that the above officials, when visiting villages, should not requisition the village bullock carts. And No. 63 instructs the royal official not to take more than two handfuls of cummin seed, black mustard and coriander seed as sample. Thus, these regulations intend to protect the public against the high-handedness of the royal officials.

Regulations 3, 4, 6-9, 16-18, 21-23 and 28-31 relate to judicial procedure. The proper presentation of a case is an essential factor in judicial proceedings. Nos. 3, 4, 6, 7 and 17 stress this aspect of a law-suit. Thus, No. 3 probably states that a case carelessly put before a court should not be accepted; No. 4 states that the royal officials should not go in for the apprehension of persons or for taking up a case against one or for seizing one's things through mere suspicion (*śaṅkā*) of a crime. No. 6 states that no haphazard allegation should be entertained against one's neighbour for the burning of one's house, when, according to the accused, the conflagration resulted from the sacred fire kindled in house. No. 7 states that no careless accusation was acceptable from a man in regard to the cutting of a bit from his own ears. And No. 17 states that a proper complaint, and not mere wailing, was acceptable to court.

Regulations 9, 21 and 22 speak of summoning of concerned persons to court. No. 21 states that persons engaged in work at home or at their shops should not be summoned to court by means of a seal-ring or a letter or by a messenger unless they were involved in a criminal case. No. 22 states that persons engaged in such works as a sacrifice or a marriage ceremony should not be summoned to court to refute charges brought against them. No. 9, intending to check the misuse of No. 21 above, states that the pretext of being engaged in work at the shop should not justify the absence of a party to a law-suit from the court.

Regulations 16 and 18 refer to bonafides of a witness. No. 16 states that a merchant belonging to another district or kingdom should not be accepted as a witness in a criminal case involving persons of a locality where he happened to be present on account of some reason or the other. No. 18 states that the *Sārikā* bird could not be allowed to be a witness in cases of defamation and assault.

According to Regulation No. 8 a law-suit could be taken up for disposal only when the complainant and the defendant were both present and never in the absence of either of the parties.

Regulation No. 23 seems to state that in the case of a debtor, for whom security had been furnished, neither handcuffs nor guards at court were necessary. When no security was furnished, the court had to arrange for the person's watch and the cost of it had to be borne by the parties.

Regulation No. 28 refers to cases of disputes in regard to the measurement, the measuring pot or the thing measured. When such cases were being tried, officials called *Uttarakulika-vārikas* were possibly not allowed to go out of court lest they be influenced by one party or the other.

Regulations 29, 30 and 31 refer to the attendance of the court staff. No. 29 states that the *Uttarakulika-vārikas* must present themselves at the court when thrice summoned by a court peon, failing which they were fined two and one-fourth silver coins. No. 30 states that if the clerks, who had to write down the statements of cases in the law-court, were absent from the court after mid- day, they were liable to a fine of six and one-fourth silver coins. And No. 31 states that no pretext of the *Uttarakulika-vārikas*, absent from the court after mid-day, was to be accepted.

Regulations 33 and 37-45 relate to fines imposed for various crimes. Of these, four prescribe amout of fine for producing and possessing illicit liquor, two for carelessly allowing one's cattle to graze the crop of others, three for defamation and assault and one for using counterfeit coins.

Regulatios 34-36 pertain to the disposal of disputes pertaining to landed property. It was necessary to inform the overlord about these disputes when they were settled by subordinate rulers or men from neighbouring villages.

At this stage we may state that these regulations listed in this inscription are full of obscure and technical words and can be interpreted in more than one way in many cases. However, they are of immense value as they reflect a systematic judicial administration and a sound state of law and order during the period under discussion.

Harsha's inscriptions have very little to state about his judicial administration. We barely come across the officials *Mahāpramātāra, Pramāṭṛi, Daussādhasādhanika, Chāṭa* and *Bhaṭa,* whom we may associate with the administration of law and justice. We have already explained that the term *pramāṭṛi* may also mean a judge. As regards *Daussādhasādhanika,* figuring for the first time in Harsha's epigraphs, we can only state that Kane[103] takes him to be one who catches dangerous robbers whom it is difficult to capture.

Fortunately, from Hiuen-Tsang and Bāṇa we come to know something about the judicial administration under Harsha. Describing the judicial processes and modes of

punishment, the Chinese pilgrim writes: " As the government is honestly administered and the people live together on good terms the criminal class is small. The statute law is sometimes violated and plots made against the sovereign; when the crime is brought to light the offender is imprisoned for life; he does not suffer any corporal punishment, but alive and dead he is not treated as member of the community (lit. as a man). For offences against social morality, and disloyal and unfilial conduct, the punishment is to cut off the nose, or an ear, or a hand, or a foot, or to banish the offender to another country or into the wilderness. Other offences can be atoned for by a money payment."[104] The narrative proceeds to describe the four ordeals, *viz.*, by water, by fire, by weighing and by poison, by which the innocence or guilt of an accused person was determined. At another place the same authority writes about Harsha : ".....and he prohibited the taking of life under severe penalties."[105]

Referring to the accounts of the two pilgrims, *viz.*, Fa-hien and Hiuen- Tsang, Majumdar writes: "Fa-hien never refers to the lawlessness from which Hiuen- Tsang, two centuries later, suffered more than once. The mild punishment of criminals referred to by him is also in striking contrast to the harsh and severe penalties mentioned by the later Chinese pilgrim."[106]

Bāṇa[107] informs us that on two occasions prisoners were set free by Harsha. The first occasion was the birth day of the king and the second one, his coronation day when he was marching for *digvijaya.*

Two records of the time of Śaśāṅka refer to the *Dharmaśāstras* and *smṛitis.* Thus, *Mahāpratihāra* Śubhakırtti is described as ruling over Daṇḍa-bhukti as per the injuctions of the *Dharmaśāstras* and considering what was just and what unjust (*Dharmaśāstr-ānurōdhēna-nyāy-ānyāyaṁ vichētari,* Text, l.7), in the Midnapore copper-plate inscription.[108] In another copper-plate inscription[109] from the same place we have the reading. .....*Parāśara-sutasy=ōchchair-vvācham śrutv=ēti bhāshitaṁ* । । *tēn=ē [daṁ cha*] samāmnātaṁ Manu-śāstr-ānuvarttinā* । (Text, ll.10-11), with reference to *Mahārāja* Sōmadatta. Thus, though we have no information of the judicial system under Śaśāṅka, there is no doubt that the *smṛitis* played a vital role in his judicial administration.

Lastly, an official called *Nyāyakaraṇika* figures in the Nidhanpur copper-plates[110] of Bhāskaravarman. This official is mentioned immediately after the *Smāpradātā* (the officer who marks boundaries) in connection with a land grant. Therefore, it is likely that the *Nyāyakaraṇika* too, was connected with the boundaries of lands. Bhattacharya[111] explains this official as "probably the adjudicator who had to inspect and decide if the boundaries were properly marked out or not, and to settle all cases of dispute."

It is interesting to note that the last verse of this record states : "Because after the burning of the plates, these newly written letters are of different form (from those of the previous inscription), therefore they are not forged (*Śāsanadāhād=arvāg=abhinava-likhitāni bhinna-rūpāṇi tēbhyō=kshatāṇi yasmāt=tasmā-[n*]=n=aitāni kūṭāni,* Text, ll.54-55)". This

statement clearly indicates that the forging of documents was in vogue during the period under discussion. This seems to be the earliest epigraphical reference to forgery as an offence.

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CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

From this chapter onwards there will be a change in the pattern of treatment of different topics. This is due to the nature of the subjects that we are going to deal with in this and the subsquent chapters. Instead of discussing the various topics of a subject under a sub-title of a chapter (*e.g.*, 'The Gupta administration'), covering a specific part of the period under study, as has been done in the previous chapters, in this and the subsequent chapters the discussion of a topic under a sub-title (*e.g.*, 'Caste system') will cover the whole period under study.

We are well aware of the fact that inscriptions alone are an inadequate source to reconstruct the social conditions of any period of Indian history. This is more true of the period we have chosen for our study. But still it is important to test their potentiality with reference to social conditions, as our chief concern is the study of inscriptions.

Caste system

The most striking feature of the Indian society has been the caste system since very early times. A society based upon the *Varṇāśrama-dharma* is the ideal one according to the *Dharmaśāstras* which enjoin that the very existence of the social structure depends upon the observance of *varṇa* and *āśrama*. *Brāhmaṇa, Kshatriya, Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* were the four *Varṇas* or castes which formed the social structure of the Aryans about the close of the Vedic period.

The *Arthaśāstra* clearly recognises the system of castes and orders *(Vaṇāśrama-dharma)* and strictly enforces disciplinary rules for any departure from the ordained path *(Chatur-varṇ-āśramō lōkō rājñā-daṇḍēna pālitaḥ । sva-dharma-karm-ābhiratō vartatē svēshu vartmasu ।।)*[1] Discussing Megasthenes' description of the Indian society, Dikshitar[2] writes: "It is more reasonable to assume that Megasthenes has been told of the caste system and the chief regulations underlying the system."

There is no reference to the *Varṇāśrama-dharma* in the edicts of Aśoka. In fact they have no direct references to the structure of the contemporary society. It is only from a few and partial glimpses afforded by two or three statements in them that we glean something of the caste system.

In R.E. V[3] we are told that the *Dharma-mahāmātras* were to concern themselves with Brāhmaṇas, *Ibhyas*, the destitute, etc. The word *Ibhya* occurring here has been rendered as Vaiśya by Bühler[4] as also by Hultzsch[5] and Bhandarkar.[6] Thus, we have here the first and the third castes of the Varṇa system. Commenting on the two expressions *vyavahāra-samatā* and *daṇḍa-samatā* occurring in P.E. IV, Sharma[7] writes: "These two terms have been rendered as 'Impartiality in judicial proceedings' and 'Impartiality in punishments'. But, in the context of the old legal discriminations based on *varṇa*, the above terms perhaps indicate an attempt on the part of an idealist ruler to do away with such distinctions." This statement seems to indirectly prove the prevalence of the caste system under Aśoka, for discriminations in punishment presuppose the existence of the caste system. Sircar[8] too accepts the existence of the caste system during the reign of Aśoka, because he renders the terms *bhṛita, arya* and *ibhya*, occurring in R.E.V as Śūdra, Vaiśya and a king, (hence, the kingly class) respectively. Regarding the existence of the Kshatriyas, Vaiśyas and the Śūdras, Bhandarkar[9] states: "It may appear somewhat singular that the Aśokan inscriptions do not contain a single reference to the Kshatriyas. But we have to bear in mind that like the Vaiśyas the Kshatriyas also, in the sense of the warrior caste, had no existence. Kshatriyas then denoted the ruling class, which in Aśoka's time comprised his relatives, his feudatories and the Anta or bordering kings in south India. And these, we know, have been referred to by Aśoka in his edicts. Like the Kshatriya or warrior caste the Śūdras also were known to theoretical discussions only, but had no real existence as a caste or a single class, and the lower strata of society in Aśoka's time are represented by Bhṛitakas or hired labourers and Dāsas or bondsmen, ...". Saletore[10] categorically states that the precepts of Kauṭilya were carried out in practice by that great Mauryan Emperor (Aśoka). If Aśoka could have practised the precepts of Kauṭilya he could not have opposed the caste system which was based on occupations *(sva-dharma-karma)*. Rayachaudhuri[11] holds that *Varṇa* and *Āśrama* were established institutions in the days of Aśoka. Thus, we may conclude that the *Varṇāśrama-dharma* prevailed in the reign of Aśoka though it does not find direct mention in his inscriptions.

It is reasonable to think that the caste system prevailed under the Śuṅgas, because they were Brāhmaṇas themselves. But what all we know about their patronage to the Vedic religion is the fact that Pushyamitra is styled as a performer of two horse sacrifices *(dvir-aśvamēdha-yājinaḥ)* in the Ayōdhyā inscription[12] of Dhana[dēva].

After the reign of the Śuṅgas and Kāṇvas, North India was ruled by the foreign invaders, the Indo-Greeks, Śakas, Kshatrapas and the Kushāṇas, till the Imperial Guptas appeared on the political stage in the first quarter of the 4th century A.D. This change of the ruling

power had its impact on the Indian society. Judging from the Indian standards there was degradation of the social values and deterioration of the Caste system.

Though there is no reference to the Varṇa system in the Kushāṇa inscriptions they clearly indicate that the Brahmanical supremacy in the social order was an accepted fact. Thus, for example, in a Mathurā Brāhmī inscription[13] of the time of Huvishka, Bakanapati and Kharasalerapati of foreign origin are stated to have made special provision for the feeding of a hundred Brāhmaṇas; and the Isāpur *Yūpa* inscription[14] of the time of Vāsishka records the setting up of the sacrificial post *(yūpa)* by the Brāhmaṇa Drōṇala, the son of Rudrila of the Bhāradvāja-gōtra, after having performed a *sattra* of twelve nights.

The Kshatrapa epigraphs have more information regarding the Caste system. Thus, the Nāsik and Kārle inscriptions[15] of the time of Nahapāna refer to the liberal gifts made to the Brāhmaṇas at holy places by Ushavadāta, the son-in-law of the king. Besides, one of these records[16] mentions the Uttamabhadrakas styled as Kshatriya *(Utama-bhadrakānam cha kshatriyānam,* Text, l.4). The Mathurā stone inscription[17] of the time of Śōḍāsa refers to the Royal treasurer *(gañjavara)* who was a Brāhmaṇa of Śēgrava-gōtra. This indicates, on the one hand, that the Brāhmaṇas were appointed to the posts of very high responsibility by the foreign rulers and, on the other, that the conventional six-fold duties of *adhyayana, adhyāpana,* etc., were not strictly adhered to by the former. The Junāgadh inscription[18] of Rudradāman contains references which clearly attest to the prevalence of and royal patronage to the Varṇa system. Thus, Rudradāman is said to have been chosen their lord by all castes *(sarvva-varṇair abhigamya rakshan-ārtham patitvē vritēna,* Text l.9). The Yaudhēyas whom this king conquered are described as heroes among all Kshatriyas *(sarvva-kshatr-āvishkrita-vīraśabda .....,* Text, ll.11-12). There is a reference to Brāhmaṇas and cows in l.15, after which some letters of the inscription are lost. But, from the context it is not difficult to know that Brāhmaṇas and cows are referred here in their honourable conventional sense. And, lastly, two of the four human goals *(chaturvidha-purushārtha)* are met with in the description of Suviśākha *(Yathāvad=artha-dharma .....* l.19). These instances suffice to prove the prevalence of the Caste system and the encouragement it received under the rule of the Kshatrapas.

Chattopadhyaya, discussing the Indianisation of the Śakas, furnishes two very interesting epigraphical references. He writes : " An instance of the Śaka-Brāhmaṇas following *pratigraha* is found in an inscription from Deo-Barnark, District Sahbad, which states that from a very early period the "Bhojaka" Brāhmaṇas had been living at that place and the Magadhan king Bālādityadeva granted the village to "Bhojaka-Brāhmaṇa" Suryamitra for the purpose of the daily worship of the Sun-god. Later on the same village was granted to "Bhojaka" Ṛsimitra by king Avantivarman.

"Bhojaka" or Bhoja was another name of the Śaka or Maga- Brāhmaṇas."[19]

He further writes about the Gōvindapūr inscription[20] of the Śaka year 1059 : "It records the history of Gaṅgādhara's family which came into contact with the Māna

rulers of Magadha. It expressly states that the Magas were the Brāhmaṇas of the *Śākadvīpa* and originally came out of the body of the Sun-god."[21] Thus, it becomes evident that the Śakas encouraged the Varṇa system.

Though a great champion of Jainism, Khāravela is stated, in the Hāthigumphā inscription,[22] to have made liberal gifts to Brāhmaṇas. This indicates that he recognised the status of Brāhmaṇas.

Lastly, the Gunji Rock inscription[23] of Kumāravaradatta, referrable to the 1st century A.D., records the gift of a thousand cows (*gosahasa*) made thrice to the Brāhmaṇas, which again suggests the high respect commanded by them.

All in all, the picture presented by the epigraphs of the post- Mauryan period is one of a general degradation of the Varṇāśrama institution on the one hand, with the noticeable dilution of the theory of *sva-dharma-karma,* and deliberate efforts on the part of both foreign and Indian rulers to encourage it on the other.

With the advent of the Imperial Guptas on the political scene India entered an age of renaissance. So far as the social conditions are concerned the revival of the system of *Varṇāśrama* is a salient feature of the Gupta age. Inscriptions of this period are illustrative of the zealous activities of the rulers to uphold the orthodox social system and maintain the chastity of the different *Varṇas.* In the Allahābād pillar inscription[24] Samudragupta has been described as the supporter of the real truth of the scriptures *(Dharma-prāchīra-bandhaḥ,* Text, l.15), and the utterance of scriptural texts *(śāstravāky-ōdaya,* Text, l.9) is said to be one of the constituents of his fame, which suggest that he enforced the system of *Varṇāśrama* prescribed by the *Dharmaśāstra.* The Nālandā copper-plate inscription[25] of the same king records the grant of two villages to a Brāhmaṇa who was conversant with the three *Vēdas (Traividya)* which is indicative of encouragement to the study of the *Vēdas.* To quote another instance, the Indōr copper-plate inscription[26] of Skandagupta refers to a community of *Chaturvēdins.* In the Karamḍāmḍā stone inscription[27] of Kumāragupta I, the Brāhmṇas from Ayōdhyā are described as conversant with penance *(tapa),* recitation of sacred texts *(svādhyāya),* the *mantras,* the *sūtras,* the *bhāshyas* and *pravachanas.* In the Mandasōr inscription[28] of Kumāragupta I and Bandhuvarman, the Brāhmaṇas at Daśapura are extolled as endowed with truthfulness, forgiveness, self-control, quiescence, religious vows, purity , fortitude, study of Vēda, proper conduct, modesty and understanding, and as stores of knowledge and penance (and yet) free from conceit *(Satya-kshamā-dama-śama-vrata-śaucha-dhai[r]yya-svādhyāya-vritta-[v]inaya-sthiti-buddhy-upētaiḥ | vidyā-tapō-nidhibhir=asmayitaiś=cha viprair=yya[d]=bhrājatē graha-gaṇaiḥ-kham= iva pradīptaiḥ ||).* The rite of *Agnihōtra*[29] and the five daily sacrifices *(pañchamahāyajña)*[30] are mentioned in the epigraphs of this period.

The Betul plates[31] of *Mahārāja* Samkshōbha, dated in the Gupta year 199, describe him as "intent upon establishing the religious duties of the castes and the different stages of human life" *(varṇ-āśrama-dharmma-sthāpan-ābhiratēna,* Text, l.11). This is not a solitary instance

of reference to the Varṇāśrama system. The Maukhari rulers Īśānavarman,[32] Śarvavarman[33] and Anantavarman,[34] all of whom flourished in the 6th century A.D., are said to have supported the system of *Varṇāśrama*. In verse 34 of the Junāgaḍh inscription,[35] of Skandagupta there is a contextually clear reference to the caste of Brāhmaṇas *(dvijātīn)*; and a relation to the *Purusha-sūkta* of the *Rigvēda*, which contains the earliest reference to the castes *(Brāhmaṇ=ōsya mukham=āsīt* .....etc.), can be traced in the first half of the first verse of the Mandasōr inscription[36] of Naravarman *(sahasra-śirasē tasmai purushāy=āmit-ātmanē)*.

All the above instances clearly indicate that the institution of *Varṇāśrama* was well established in the Gupta age and the Brāhmaṇas adhered to their duties as prescribed in the *Dharmaśāstra*. But this is not the whole picture, for at least one example of a Brāhmaṇa family taking to the profession of a Kshatriya is furnished by a Gupta epigraph.[37] Thus, Prithvishēṇa, whose grand father, Vishṇupālitabhaṭṭa was a teacher of the Chhandōga, is stated to have been the *Mahābalādhikṛita* of Kumāragupta I, and his father Śikharasvāmin, the *Mantri-Kumārāmātya* of Chandragupta II. Therefore, it seems that the injuctions of the *Dharmaśāstra* in this regard were not strictly followed.

Inscriptions are of little help in knowing the castes of the rulers of North India during this period. Very few epigraphs contain information on this subject. Thus, the Chhōṭī Sādṛī inscription[38] of Gauri of the Māṇvāyaṇi family, datable in 491 A.D., states that the kings of this family dedicated themselves permanently to the dignity of the Kshatra (Kshatriya) status and were skilled in war *(kshātrē padē satata-dīkshita-yuddha-śauṇḍāḥ*, Text, l.4). About the Maukharis Thaplyal[39] writes: "The *Varman*-ending names of the rulers, reference to them as descendants of king Aśvapati in the Haraha inscription, expressions like "lamp of the Kshatriya family" and "the abode of (all) the dignity of the Kshatriyas" applied to Yajñavarman in the epigraphs, indicate that the Maukharis were Kshatriyas."

Like Brāhmaṇas, Kshatriyas too took to non-Kshatriya professions at times. Thus, there is a reference to Kshatriya merchants *(Indrāpuraka- vaṇigbhyām Kshattriy-Āchalavarma-Bhṛikuṇṭhasinhabhyām* ..... Text, l.6) in the Indōr copper-plate inscription[40] of Skandagupta. Perhaps another example of such deviation from one's own traditional profession is furnished by the guild of silk-weavers[41] at Daśapura some of whose members are said to have taken to arms, some to the study of (Vedic) astronomy and others, to various other professions.

Epigraphs of this period do not refer to the Vaiśyas as such. But references to such terms as *nagaraśrēshṭhin* and *śrēṇi* attest to the existence of the class of people who were engaged in trade which is the occupation of the Vaiśyas as prescribed by the *Dharmaśāstra*. In this connection we have to note that the Sohāwal copper-plate inscription[42] of *Mahārāja* Śarvanātha belonging to 510-11 A.D., mentions a village called Vaiśyavāṭaka.

Like the Vaiśyas, the Śūdras too are not found mentioned as such in the epigraphs of this period. Sharma[43] holds that there were Śūdras in the Gupta period. He writes:

"The land grants of this period, made in Central India, repeatedly refer to the tax-paying *Kuṭumbins* and *Kārus* (artisans). It is beyond doubt that the *Kārus* were *śūdras*, but this cannot be said of the *Kuṭumbins* with the same certainty." In the same paragraph he writes :[44] "It is not unlikely that the tax-paying cultivator families of the Gupta period included *śūdras* as well."

Thus, the inscriptions of the period under discussion attest to a well established Varṇa system which was not rigid.

The revival of the Varṇāśrama system initiated in the Gupta period gained momentum in the post-Gupta period. The numerous land grants of the Maitrakas of Valabhī are solid proof of this fact. Almost all rulers including Lōkanātha of the Tīpperah copper-plate grant,[45] belonging to 650 A.D., who was of a mixed caste (*karaṇa*) supported the Varṇāśrama system.

Kharagraha II is described as having "properly regulated the practices of the different castes and stages of life" (*samyag-vyavasthāpita-varṇ-āśram=āchāraḥ*, Text, ll.43-44) in the Lunsaḍī plates[46] of Śīlāditya II and the Alīnā copper-plate inscription[47] of Śīlāditya VII. Dadda III of the Gurjara family is also said to have enforced the *Varṇāśrama-vyavasthā* (*Varṇ-āśrama-vyavasth-ōnmūlita-sakala-*[*Kali**]*-kṛ(kā)l=āvalēpaḥ*, Text, ll.8-9) in his Prince of Wales Museum plates.[48] Likewise, Harsha's father Prabhākaravardhana is described as *varṇ-āśrama-vyavasthāpana-pravṛitta-chakraḥ*, in both the Banskhēra plate[49] and the Madhuban grant.[50] The two Midnapore copper-plate inscriptions[51] of the time of Śaśāṅka clearly state that the *Dharmaśāstra* was held in high regard which indicates the enforcement of the Varṇāśrama system.

Inscriptions speak of encouragement to the study of the Vedic lore during this period. The Madhuban copper-plate of Harsha, just referred to, records a grant made to two learned Brāhmaṇas, one well versed in the *Sāmavēda* and the other in the *Ṛigvēda*. The Lunsaḍī plates[52] of Śīlāditya II refer to two Brāhmaṇas coming from Dvīpa (modern Diu) and belonging to the *Chāturvidya* community. A stone inscription[53] from Kudārkoṭ in the Itawa District of the N.W. Provinces, palaeographically assignable to the 7th century A.D., records the erection of a building for Brāhmaṇas familiar with the three *Vēdas*. The locality called Gavīdhumat where this building was erected is described thus — "this pleasant Gavīdhumat, where the quarters of the heavens are deafened by the noise of the constant explanation of Vedic lore. ..." (*ramyē-Gavīdhumati samtata-vēda-vidyā-vyākhyāna-ghōsha-vadhirīkṛita-dīn-mukhē=smin*, Text, ll.10-11).

Several inscriptions of the Maitrakas and other rulers of this period refer to the *pañcha-mahāyajñas*. The Tipperah copper-plate grant of Lōkanātha[54] referred to above states that the *Mahāsāmanta* Pradōshaśarman requested the king for land for the maintenance of the rites of *ashṭapushpikā, bali, charu* and *satra* by Brāhmaṇas versed in the four *Vēdas*.

Thus, it becomes evident that the system of *Varṇāśrama* was enfored and Vedic studies and rites were encouraged during the period under discussion. But, as in the Gupta

period, in this period too, Brāhmaṇas at times took to non-Brahmanical professions. Thus for instance, *Mahāsāmanta* Pradōshaśarman, just referred to, who was a scion of a noble family of Brāhmaṇas, is stated to have risen to the dignity of a *Mahāsāmanta* by the strength of his own arm. An instance of heroism of Brāhmaṇas is furnished by Sharma[55] who states, that, in an inscription belonging to 654 A.D., from the Bharatpur state, a Brāhmaṇa Lōkāditya, is recorded as having died fighting against a number of robbers.

Perhaps, with the exception of the Maitrakas and Maukharis, the rulers of this period were non-Kshatriyas. Again, the epigraphs of this period, like those of the Gupta period, do not directly refer to the Vaiśyas and Śūdras.

We may conclude this section by quoting Hiuen- Tsang's[56] observation on the caste system. He writes: "There are four orders of hereditary clan distinctions. The first is that of Brāhmins or "purely living"; these keep their principles and live continently, strictly observing ceremonial purity. The second order is that of Kshatriyas, the race of kings; this order has held sovereignty for many generations, and its aims are benevolence and mercy. The third order is that of Vaisyas or class of traders, who barter commodities and pursue gain far and near. The fourth class is that of Sūdras or agriculturists; these toil at cultivating the soil and are industrious at sowing and reaping. These four castes form classes of various degrees of ceremonial purity."

Slavery

Slavery was a recognised institution of Indian society from the oldest Vedic times. Kauṭilya[57] lays down regulations regarding the treatment of the slaves. In R.E. IX[58] and XIII[59] Aśoka refers to the need for showing proper courtesy to slaves and servants *(dāsa-bhatakam=hi=samya-pratipatı)*. R.E. XIII[60] mentions deportation of 1,50,000 people from Kaliṅga. Earlier in Chapter II we have stated that these captives were to be employed as slaves. This view is supported by Thapar[61] who states: "It is unlikely that the entire number were enslaved, but a certain percentage of them must have been employed as slaves." From the repeated instructions of Aśoka in the Edicts, that slaves and servants should be treated kindly, we may presume that the fate of slaves was not hard.

In the inscriptions of the post-Mauryan period we do not come across any reference to the system of slavery. This holds good with reference to the epigraphs of the Gupta and the post-Gupta periods also. However, Verma[62] holds that the word *dāsa* occurring in the Allahābād inscription of Samudragupta and the Udayagiri cave inscription of Chandragupta II, indirectly by metaphorical comparison, proves the existence of slaves. It is not difficult to understand that in the first record, the word *dāsa* is used to emphasise the great amount of devotion on the part of Harishēṇa to his master and, in the second one it helps to heighten the degree of the valour of the king described. Thus, it is difficult to accept the existence of slavery on the basis of this word in these contexts. However, this is not to deny the existence of slavery in the Gupta period at all, for there is a solitary reference to female slaves *(dāsı)* in Sañjēli copper-plate inscription[63] of

Tōramāṇa and we are aware of the fact that the *smṛitis*[64] assignable to this period mention slavery in detail. So far as the post-Gupta period is concerned, we may note that Hiuen-Tsang does not make any direct reference to slavery. He[65] indirectly points out that "individuals are not subject to forced labour contribution" and that even in the government service they were "paid according to their work". These remarks, not explicitly pertaining to the institution of slavery as such, enable us to presume that slavery might not have been practised during the age of Harsha.

Marriage

Under this head we propose to discuss only inter-caste marriage and polygamy. Other details like the types of marriage *(Brāhma, Daiva,* etc.), and the marriage ceremony proper, are not furnished by inscriptions.

In a society where the Varṇāśrama system prevailed it is but natural to expect marriages within castes in the normal course. But the epigraphs of the period under discussion furnish clear examples of inter-caste marriages, though within the limits of *smṛiti* sanctions.

We have no knowledge of the caste of one of Aśoka's wives, Kāruvāki, mentioned in the Queen's P.E.[66] But, if Bühler's[67] suggestion that the name Kāruvāki may be connected with Vēdic *gōtra* of the Kārus is accepted, perhaps we have here an instance of an inter-caste marriage.

Inscriptions attest to the matrimonial alliances between the Śaka- Kshatrapas and the Indian rulers in the post-Mauryan period. Chattopadhyaya[68] writes: "From the Girnar epigraph of Rudradāman we learn that Śātakarṇi, the lord of Dakshiṇāpatha, was related to him, while, from the evidence of Kanheri inscription, we may infer further that this Śātakarṇi was a son-in-law of Rudradāman. Gautamıputra is stated to have stopped the admixture of castes and restored the *Brahmanya dharma* and yet one of his near descendants married a Śaka girl. From the evidence of the Nagarjunikonda inscription, we get another instance of Śaka-Indian marriage. The Ikṣvāku king Vırapuruṣadatta had as his queen the *mahādevı* Rudrabhaṭṭārikā who is described as *Ujanikamahāra-bālikā*. Vogel is inclined to correct the passage as *Ujanikā-mahārāja-bālikā* and then identifies Ujanikā with the famous city of Ujjayinı, which was under the sway of the Śaka-Kṣatrapas. Rudrabhaṭṭārikā, therefore, seems to have been the daughter of a Śaka king of Ujjayinı. According to Dr. D.C. Sircar, it is not altogether improbable that the Ikṣvāku queen was related to either Rudrasena I (A.D. 200-13) or Rudrasena II (A.D. 254-75)." In fact such alliances should be properly termed inter-racial marriage, but we are justified in calling them inter-caste marriages as these races had adopted the Hindu customs, manners, religions, etc., and had become one with the Indian society.

Inscriptions of the Gupta period offer examples of both the types of inter-caste marriage, *viz., Anulōma* (i.e. marriage between a male of a higher caste and a female of

a lower caste) and *Pratilōma* (i.e. marriage between a female of a higher caste and a male of a lower caste). Thus, the marriage of Prabhāvatī Guptā (daughter of Chandragupta II, who was probably a Vaiśya king) was solemnised with Vākāṭaka Rudrasēna II, an orthodox Brāhmaṇa turned Kshatriya.[69] The Mandasōr inscription[70] of Yaśōdharman of Mālava mentions Brāhmaṇa Ravikīrti as the husband of Bhānu Guptā who was of Kshatriya caste. These are examples of *Anulōma* marriages. The *Pratilōma* type is evidenced in the marriage alliances between Chandragupta I and Kumāradēvī, a Lichchhavi princess of a Kshatriya clan,[71] between Chandragupta II and Kubēranāgā, a Nāga princess of the Kshatriya clan,[72] and between the daughters of the Kadamba ruler Kākusthavarman who was a Brāhmaṇa and the Gupta and other kings.

In the epigraphs of the post Gupta period we have no such examples except that the maternal great grandfather of Lōkanātha of the Tipperah copper-plate grant[73] had obviously married a Śūdra wife because of which the former's son (i.e., Lōkanātha's grandfather) was branded as a *pāraśava*. It may be noted that though this record belongs to 650 A.D. the inter-caste marriage in question is to be assigned to the Gupta period only.

At this stage we may state that all the instances of inter-caste marriages quoted above, with the exception of Lōkanātha's great-grandfather, pertain to persons of the ruling class. They only establish that inter-caste marriages were in vogue in the society, but not that it was a popular practice; obviously, such alliances were struck by the ruling class for political reasons. And there has always been difference in the standard of morality of the rich and ruling sections and that of the common man in all societies.

Polygamy in Indian society can be traced back to Rigvēdic times. Megasthenes[74] observes that the Indians "marry many wives; some they marry hoping to find in them willing helpmates; and others for pleasure and to fill their houses with children." From the evidence of the Queen's P.E.,[75] we come to know that Aśoka had at least two wives for, Kāruvāki, the mother of Tivara, is qualified in this epigraph as the second queen (*dutiyāye deviye*, Text, l.5) of the king.

The adjective *agramahishi* with reference to the queen of Rājūla in the Mathurā Lion Capital inscription[76] and the epithet *narēndra-ka[nyā]-svayaṁvar-ānēka-mālya-prāpta-dāmn[ā]* (Text, l.15) applied to Rudradāman in the Junāgadh inscription[77] show that polygamy was permitted in the Śaka society. The epigraphs of the Kushāṇa rulers do not inform anything about their queens. In the Hāthi-bādā Brāhmī inscription[78] of the 1st century B.C. at Nagarī, King Sarvatāta is called *Gājāyana Pārāśariputra*. Here the metronymic *Pārāśariputra* shows that the king's mother belonged to the Parāśara-gōtra. Similarly, Dēvamitra of the Musānagar Brick inscription[79] is described as the son of Aśvavātāyani, which is again a metronymic indicating that this lady belonged to the Aśvavātāyana-gōtra. Another such example is furnished by the Silaharā Cave inscription[80] of the same period wherein *Amātya* Mūladēva has been described both as Vachha (=Vātsa) and Mogaliputa (=Maudgaliputra). Here too, the metromymic

Maudagalī shows that Mūladēva's mother belonged to the Mudgala-gōtra. Commenting on the use of these metronymics, Bhandarkar[81] writes: "When and where polygamy is in vogue, it is absolutely necessary to distinguish the sons of one wife from those of another. The practice is still prevalent in Rājputānā. If a Rājpūt prince marries more than one princess, they are always distinguished one from the other, according as she is a Hāḍī-ji, Rāṇāavat-ji, and so forth. Such must have been the case in Ancient India also." Reference to Khāravela's wife as *agramahishi* in the Mañchapurī Cave inscription[82] clearly shows that he had more than one wife, and the Bhārhut Buddhist pillar inscription[83] consists as many as three metronymics, *viz.*, Gargī-putra, Gauptī-putra and Vātsyī-putra. Thus, the existence of polygamy in the post-Mauryan period becomes established.

Inscriptions of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods hardly refer to polygamy, except informing that Chandragupta II had at least two wives, Kubēranāgā and Dhruvasvāminī. But we know from the *smṛitis* and the secular literature of the period that polygamy was in vogue.

Here again we may state that since the examples quoted by us in support of prevalence of polygamy pertain to the persons of ruling class, like inter-caste marriage, polygamy too seems to have been practised mostly by the ruling and the rich classes. But polygamy seems to have been more frequent than inter-caste marriage, because the Hindus in general considered a son to be an absolute necessity for offering oblations to ancestors.

Women

It is rather difficult to deal with different aspects of the life of the fair sex as depicted in the inscriptions of the period with which we are concerned because, but for the references to charitable and religious gifts of certain queens and ladies devoted to Buddhism and Jainism, we hardly come to know anything of the life of womenfolk from the epigraphs. A consistent and chronological treatment of different topics seems to be next to impossible. However, we try to furnish the data collected by us as systematically as possible.

From the Queen's P.E.[84] we come to know that Kāruvāki, the second queen of Aśoka, made certain gifts. The Mathurā Lion Capital inscription[85] informs us that the Chief Queen of the *Mahākshatrapa* Rājūla, together with her mother Abūhōlā, her paternal grandmother Pispasi, her brother Hayuarā (?), her daughter Hana, her household and court of *hōrakās* (ladies), deposited a relic in a *stūpa*. The Mañchapurī cave inscription[86] records the establishment of a cave by the Chief Queen of Khāravela. It is to be noted that she is described in this record as the daughter of *Rājan* Lālaka, great-grandson of Hathisimha. The Ichchhāwar Buddhist statuette inscription[87] records the gift of Mahādēvī, queen (*rājñī*) of Hariḍāsa of the Gupta race. Inscriptions and seals[88] of the Imperial Guptas, the Maukharis, Harsha and the rulers of Prāgjyōtisha, all refer to the queens of

these dynasties with great respect. The epithets *mahādēvī* (Gupta seals), *bhaṭṭārikā-dēvī* and *bhaṭṭārikā-mahādēvī* (Maukhari seals) and *dēvī* and *paramabhaṭṭārikā-mahādēvī* (Harsha's seal) are prefixed to the names of these queens.

From the examples quoted above we come to know firstly, that gifts made by queens were made known to the public and perpetuated by means of inscriptions, secondly, that the ancestries of the queens were duly respected in such records and, thirdly, as evidenced in the records of the Guptas and others, the names of the queens with honorific prefixes were invariably included in the genealogical portions of inscriptions. It is to be noted here that none of these queens is known to have practically participated in politics or administration. Therefore, it becomes evident that, irrespective of their contribution to the welfare of the State, queens in ancient India were held in very high respect. But, that they might have had some sort of participation in the administration of the State is indicated by the seals[89] of *Mahādēvī* Prabhudamā, daughter of the *Mahākshatrapa* Rudrasimha, and Dhruvasvāminī referred to as queen of *Mahārājādhirāja* Chandragupta and mother of *Mahārāja* Gōvindagupta.

We have earlier noted that there was an official called *Ithijhakamahāmātra* under Aśoka's administration. Though this official is compared by scholars[90] to the *Gaṇikādhyaksha* of the *Arthaśāstra*, in our opinion he was concerned with the welfare of the womenfolk in general. Bhandarkar[91] thinks that he was to arrange for providing subsistence to helpless women when they were carrying and also to children they might give birth to. Therefore, it is quite likely that this official was appointed to look after the all-round welfare of the womenfolk. This speaks of the concern of the State towards women.

The heretical religions, which flourished under the patronage of the Greeks and Śaka-Kshatrapas, and Kushāṇas, allowed more and more freedom to women especially in religious matters and thus became instrumental in their advancement. Inscriptions of this period record a number of religious gifts made by women. Thus, for instance, the Kshatrapa inscription[92] at Mōrā records the installation of the images of the Pañchavīras by a lady, Toshā by name; the Kōsam inscription[93] of the reign of Kanishka records the setting up of an image of Bōdhisattva by the nun Buddhamitrā; and a Mathurā Jaina image inscription[94] records the dedication of an image by Dharmmasōmā, the wife of a caravan-leader (*sarttavāhinī*). Such examples can be multiplied.

Some of these ladies became well known due to their scholarship in the field of religious studies. Thus, for example a lady, Avisinā by name, is stated to have been well versed in *sūtrāntas* (*sūtāntikinī*) in a Sāñchī inscription.[95] About the nun Buddhamitrā, referred to above, Goswami[96] writes: ".... the donor of the image is the Buddhist nun Buddhamitrā. We come across the same name among the donors of the Sārnāth images of the 3rd year of Kanishka. This name again occurs on an inscribed Bōdhisattva image from Mathurā of the year 33 of king Huvishka. In all these places she is mentioned as

well versed in the *Tripiṭaka*, while in the Sārnāth and Mathurā inscriptions, we are further told that she was a female pupil of the monk Bala, who knew the *Tripiṭaka*. It may be reasonably concluded here that Buddhamitrā of all the records mentioned above, is one and the same person. That she was a very well-known lady appears from the fact that the nun Dhanavatī, donor of a Bōdhisattva image at Mathurā, introduces herself as the sister's daughter of the *Tripiṭaka* Buddhamitrā."

A noteworthy point in connection with the Buddhist monks and nuns mentioned in the epigraphs of this period is the marked superiority of the former over the latter. In his note on Bhikshuṇis in Indian inscriptions, Law[97] writes: "the nuns are mentioned generally as *bhikshuṇis* or *bhichhuṇis*, while the monks are honoured with such epithets as *bhadaṁta*, *bhayaṁta*, *aya*(*ārya*) and *bhadaṁtaya*, a fact which may not be unreasonably taken to indicate the inferior position accorded to the nuns as compared with the monks".

Another kind of evidence can be adduced from the inscriptions to substantiate the fact that women were held in high respect during the period under discussion. Obedience to elders is an important constituent of Asoka's *Dharma*. What is relevant here is the fact that the mother is specifically mentioned in Aśoka's records among the persons to be obeyed. Thus, for example, R.E. XI[98] enjoins obedience to mother, and obedience to parents is mentioned at the very opening of the second Edict[99] at Siddāpura. The Zeda inscription[100] of the year 11 records the gift of a *toyaṁda* by Hipe Dhia, for the merit of his mother. The Ārā inscription[101] of Kanishka II records the digging of a well by Dashafota in honour of his mother and father. Parivrājaka king Hastin is described as a "devout worshipper of teacher, father and mother" (*guru-pitṛi-mātṛi-pūjā-tatparēṇa*, Text, l.5) in his grants.[102] These examples are clear indications of high regard paid to woman as mother. Some of the personal names, occurring in the epigraphs of the Gupta period, with the word 'mother' (*mātṛi*) as their first component, *viz.*, Mātṛichēṭa, Mātṛidāsa, Mātṛiśarman, Mātṛiśarmārya, Mātṛiśiva, Mātṛitula and Mātṛivisṇu,[103] also suggest the same thing.

In the Ārā inscription referred to above Dashafota's wife is stated to have joined her husband in his pious act. One of the regulations included in the *āchāra-sthiti-pātra* (list of regulations or customary laws) approved by Vishṇushēṇa, in his charter[104] of 592 A.D. and 605 A.D., enjoins that the wife should not be apprehended for her husband's guilt (*Purush-āparādhē strī na grāhyā*, Text, l.5). Two Allahābād Museum inscriptions[105] of the time of *Mahārāja* Bhadramagha, assignable to the 2nd century A.D. record the setting up of two slabs by the son and daughter of a saddler. It is to be noted here that this daughter, mentioned by her name (Śanikā), is given the status of a joint-donor with her brother. Such instances, though few and far between, show that woman was held in high honour not only as mother but even as wife, daughter and sister. A rare, if not unique, instance of great respect towards a maid servant is found in the Wandh inscription[106] of Rudrasimha I, of 183 A.D. It records the installation of a funeral monument by Ajamitra in memory of a woman (name not legible) who is described as the servant of his mother (*mātṛi-sevikā*) and as belonging to Atimutaka-gōtra and Kaśa-dēśa. As the editor of this

record puts it, in all probability, Ajamitra employed the woman to look after his mother and she discharged her duties loyally and faithully, but suddenly passed away. Having been moved by the devoted service that this woman rendered to his mother, Ajamitra seems to have set up this stone memorial.

Sircar[107] states that there is definite evidence to show that *Satī* was practised in India at least from the 4th century B.C. down to 1829 A.D., when it was prohibited by law. Satya Shrava,[108] quoting from Altekar, writes: "The Scythian influence further helped the spread of the custom (satī). A considerable portion of northern India was under the rule of Scythians from *circa* 150 B.C. to *circa* 250 A.D. and among them the custom of burning the wife along with the remains of a departed chief was quite common." But there is not even a single epigraphical evidence to show that the custom of *satī* prevailed under the Scythian rule. For the whole of the period under discussion there is only one epigraphical reference to committance of *satī* in North India. The Ēraṇ stone pillar inscription[109] of Bhānugupta, dated in 510-11 A.D., records that, in the company of Bhanugupta, who was a great ruler, his chieftain or noble named Gōparāja came to Ēraṇ and fought a battle with the Maitras; that Gōparāja was killed; and that his wife accompained him, by cremating herself on his funeral pyre, apparently near the place where the pillar was set up. This epigraph proves the existence of the custom of *satī* in the Gupta period.

Very little can be known from the epigraphs of the period under review regarding the status of widows in the society. What all we come to know from the inscriptions of the Gupta period and the post-Gupta period is that women continued to live, even after the death of their husbands. Thus, for example, Prabhāvatiguptā,[110] daughter of Chandragupta II and widow of the Vākāṭaka king Rudrnsēna II, ruled as regent-mother for the crown prince Divākarasēna. The Bhitarī stone pillar inscription[111] speaks about the widowed mother of Skanda-gupta (*pitari divam=upete.....mātaraṁ-sāsra-nettrām*, Text, V. 6). We also get indirect references to widows in some inscriptions. Thus, for example, the Mandasōr stone inscription[112] of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman, dated in 473-74 A.D., referring to the exploits of the latter, states: "Even today, when the long eyed lovely woman of (his) enemies, pained with the fierce pangs of widowhood think of him, they stagger about through fear "(*vaidhavya-tvra-vyasana-kshatānām .....*, Text, ll.15-16). Likewise, the undated Nāgārjunī hill cave inscription[113] of Anantavarman, also records how his arrows taught the wives of his enemies the conditions of the sorrows of widowhood (*vāṇō=ri-strī-vyasana-padavī-dēśikō=Nanta-nāmnā(mnā)ḥ*, Text, l.8).

Courtesans

Though the origin of prostitution in India can be traced back to a hoary antiquity and though Kauṭilya lays down detailed rules for regulating this profession, it is rather strange that we should get only three epigraphical references on the subject for the whole period under discussion. The earliest epigraphical reference to a *Dēvadāsī* is

furnished by the inscription[114] in the Jōgīmārā Cave on the Rāmgaṛh hill. This inscription, assignable to the 3rd century B.C. on palaeographical basis, states that there was a *Dēvadāsī*, Sutanukā by name, who was loved by Devadinna, native of Bārāṇasī and a banker (*rūpadaksha*) by profession. According to Bhandarkar,[115] it appears that the Jōgīmārā Cave was excavated originally by Devadinna for gratifying his amorous propensities. Now the word *dēvadāsī* primarily means a female in the service of gods or a temple and also a courtesan. The context of the present epigraph points to the second sense of the word, for, firstly, there is no mention of either a deity or a temple which Sutanukā might have served, secondly, the very purport of this record is to declare her love affair with Devadinna and lastly, if her name signified anything, she possessed a beautiful physique (*su-tanukā*). The next record referring to courtesans is a Jaina inscription[116] from Mathurā assignable to the early centuries of the Christian era when both Buddhism and Jainism flourished at Mathurā under the patronage of the foreign rulers. In this record, the setting up of a shrine of the *Arhat*, and an *āyāgasabhā*, a reservoir and stone slabs in the Arhat temple of the *Nirgranthas*, is credited to the lay-disciple of the ascetics, the courtesan (*gaṇikā*) Vāsū, daughter of the courtesan (*gaṇikā*) Lavaṇa Śōbhikā. Lastly, the Vasantgaḍh inscription[117] of Varmalāta, dated in 625 A.D., mentions a courtesan (*gaṇikā*) named Būṭā who was attached to the temple of *Srī-mātā*, as a member of the *gōshṭhī* which caused to be built or rebuilt the temple of the goddess Kshēmāryā.

These three records, belonging to different dates of the period we are concerned with, are hardly sufficient to know in detail the general conditions of the courtesans. Yet their evidence is valuable so far as it throws light on one of the aspects of the life of women in ancient India. In all the three instances quoted above it is worthy of note that courtesans were held in honour. Thus, Sutanukā, the *dēvadāsī* was deemed worthy of love by a banker who felt proud to perpetuate his love by means of an inscription; Vāsū, the *gaṇikā* was rich enough to afford costly dedicatory works and was offered the status of a lay-disciple of the ascetics (*samaṇasāvikā*) and the *gaṇikā* Būṭā was honoured with the membership of the temple committee (*gōshṭhī*).

Food and Drink

From R.E.I.[118] and P.E. V[119] of Aśoka we come to know that meat eating was very popular in the Mauryan period. These two records furnish a long list of animals and birds that were killed for food. In the first record Aśoka tells us that the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of animals was daily going on in the royal kitchen before the edict was promulgated, that afterwards only three animals, *viz.*, two peacocks and one deer, were being killed, and that even these three animals should not be killed in future. Bhandarkar[120] ascribes the slaughter of a large number of animals at the royal kitchen to Aśoka's habit of distributing meat among his subjects, like Rantidēva of the *Mahābhārata*, to become popular. This fact, together with the list of animals and birds slaughtered for food, given in P.E. V[121] shows how popular the non-vegetarian food

was. In his remarks on the translation of P.E. V, Bühler[122] identifies the animals and birds mentioned in that record. We may mention some of the creatures that were killed for food. Though only bull, stag, rhinoceros and goat are mentioned in the inscription, it may be reasonably presumed that most of the quadrupeds which could be used as food were killed. Fish and tortoise among water animals and arboreal creatures like squirrel, lizard, queenant were eaten. It is to be noted that the list of creatures occurring in this record is of those that were not to be killed. So one can easily imagine what a rich variety of non-vegetarian food the people of the Mauryan period could have enjoyed.

Epigraphs of the post-Mauryan period hardly inform us anything about non-vegetarian food. However, an inscription[123] from Nāsik records the gift of a cave by a fisherman *(dāsaka)*. Therefore, it may be held that fish was eaten during this period.

Inscriptions of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods, too, are of little help to know about the non-vegetarian food. Commenting on Fa-hien's observation on the non-prevalence of non-vegetarian food in the 'Middle Kingdom', Saletore[124] states: "It is not unreasonable to suppose that vegetarian and non-vegetarian diet prevailed side by side in Gupta times from the fourth till the fifth centuries despite Fa-Hien's observations to the contrary. This traveller, being an ardent Buddhist, probably moved only in Buddhist circles and Buddhists being invariably vegetarians, although there were exceptions among them, his remarks are evidently confined to their own activities. From the works of Kālidāsa it is, however, clear that there prevailed in his day the practice of consuming meat in northern India". Of later times, we are informed by Hiuen- Tsang[125] that fish, mutton, venison were occasionally served and that the flesh of oxen, asses, elephants, horses, pigs, dogs, foxes, wolves, lions, monkeys, was forbidden, and those who ate such food became pariahs. At another place[126] he states that constantly in his travelling palace, king Harsha would provide choice meats for men of all sorts of religion.

Aśokan inscriptions have no occasion to speak of vegetarian food. In fact, whatever information we have furnished is only a byproduct of a record whose main aim is to preach nonviolence and piety. But, reference to Buddhists, Jains, Brāhmaṇas, monks, ascetics, etc., in Aśokan inscriptions shows that many people in the society must have lived on vegetarian food. However, there is no reference to vegetarian food items in these records.

Of the post-Mauryan period, the Mathurā Brāhmī inscription[127] of the year 28, recording a perpetual endowment by a foreigner, mentions articles of food to be given daily to the hungry and the thirsty, consisting of barley meal *(saktu)*, salt *(lavaṇa)* and some green vegetables *(hāritakalāpaka)*. This epigraph, though a solitary one, gives some idea of the vegetarian food items of this period.

From the Gupta period onwards we get some details of the vegetarian food items. There are a few records which refer to grain in general. Thus, for example, the Sañjēli

copper-plate inscription[128] of Tōramāṇa, year 3, assignable to the 6th century A.D., mentions grain-load *(dhānya-bhalla)* and cart-load of grain *(dhānya-śakaṭa)*; and, in the Maitraka charters,[129] *dhānya* is mentioned as an item of income from a grant-village. This shows that different kinds of grains were used for food. Tōramāṇa's record just referred to mentions molasses *(guḍa)* and salt *(lavaṇa)*, two articles used for food. It also mentions oil *(taila)* as one of the items offered to a temple. Two other copper-plate charters[130] from Sañjēli, one of *Mahārāja* Bhūta and the other of *Mahārāja* Mātridāsa, of the same period as the one referred to above, also mention oil in the same context. There are some more records[131] of this period referring to oil. The Indōr copper-plate inscription[132] of Skandagupta refers to a guild of oil-men and supply of oil for lamp. All these references suggest that oil was produced in large quantities, and, therefore, it must have been an important food item. Regulation No. 49 of Vishṇushēṇa's charter[133] of 605 A.D. refers to sugarcane plantation which indicates the manufacture of molasses. This charter also mentions the plantation of ginger *(alla*, Regulation No. 50)[134] and the sale of large quantities of cummin seeds *(kaṇikā)* black mustard *(rājikā)* and coriander seeds *(kustumbarī*, regulation No. 63).[135] All these are popular spices of India even today.

Milk and its products were consumed in plenty throughout the period under discussion. R.E. XII[136] of Aśoka refers to a class of officials called *Vrajabhūmikas* whom scholars take to be superintendents of cowpens or officers in charge of royal cattle and pasture lands. This clearly indicates that special care was taken to breed cattle obviously for the milk it produced. In the post-Mauryan period Ushavadāta, the son-in-law of the *Kshatrapa* Nahapāna, is stated in the Nāsik and Kārle inscriptions[137] to have given thousands of cows to Brāhmaṇas. This shows the high regard in which cows were held and the use of milk and its products. From the Gupta period and onwards there are plenty of references to cows and milk and its products. Samudragupta is described as the giver of crores of cows, in the records[138] of his successors. In the Jabalpur plates[139] of *Mahārāja* Hastin, dated in the Gupta Era 170, a cattle-pound *(ghōsha)* is included in the list of assets of the grant village, and the king is described as a giver of thousands of cows. The Nālandā stone inscription[140] of the reign of Yaśōvarmadēva, assignable to the 6th century A.D., records how Mālāda distributed daily rice with (various) preparations, curds and copious ghee to the monks *(samyag= bahu-ghṛita-dadhibhir=vyañjanair=yuktam=annam*, Text, l.13). In the Talēśvara plate[141] of Dyutivarman, palaeographically assignable to the 6th century A.D., bathing with curds, milk and ghee *(dadhi-kshīra-ghṛita-snapana*, Text, ll.8-9) is mentioned as one of the services to the god. Regulations 20, 40 and 41 of Vishṇushēṇa's charter[142] referred to above mention cowherds, cows and buffaloes respectively. All these instances attest to the consumption of milk and its products by people in the Gupta and post-Gupta periods.

Though different kinds of fruits and roots might have been used as part of vegetarian food, epigraphical references to them are very few and far between. R.E. II[143] informs

us that Aśoka caused to be imported and planted roots and fruits (fruit-bearing trees) wherever they were not available and that he caused to be planted trees for the use of cattle and men. This clearly shows that different kinds of fruits and roots were used as food items. From P.E. VII[144] we come to know that mango-groves were caused to be planted by Aśoka. We have not come across references to fruits in the epigraphs of the post-Mauryan period. In the subsequent period we have a few references. Thus, in the Mandasōr inscription[145] of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman there is reference to groves of plantain trees *(kadalī-vana*, Text, l.7). Likewise, another inscription[146] from the same place alludes to a tree yielding ripe and sweet fruits *(pariṇati-hita-svādu-phaladam drumam* Text, l.20). The word *kēlā* occurring in Rugulation No. 68 of Viṇushēṇa's charter[147] referred to above seems to refer to plantains.

Though Kauṭilya[148] gives a detailed description of various kinds of liquor, Aśokan inscriptions are silent on this subject. But there is an indirect clue in R.E. I[149] to the prevalence of consumption of liquor. In this edict Aśoka prohibits one kind of festival meeting *(samāja)* in which he sees much evil. Commenting on this kind of *samāja*, Smith[150] writes: "The popular festival kind, accompanied by animal fights, heavy drinking and feasting, including much consumption of meat, was necessarily condemned by Aśoka, as being inconsistent with his principles." As usual the epigraphs of the post- Mauryan period virtually throw no light on this subject barring the stray references to the community of distillers *(kālavāḍa* or *kālavāḷa*, see Chapter I, p. 10).

Writing on the use of liquor in Gupta times, Saletore[151] states : "That women too in the Gupta age indulged in intoxicants can be proved by contemporary inscriptional evidence. The Mandasor stone inscription of Kumāragupta I and Bandhuvarman, dated A.D. 475-76, records how the sun was 'of a dark-red colour, like the cheeks of intoxicated women'. In all likelihood this comparison was one from real life." The passage in question reads: *kshīb-āṃganā- jana-kapōla-tal-ābhitāmraḥ* (Text, ll.2-3).[152] The charter of Vishnushēṇa, mentioned above, bears testimony to the widely prevalent habit of consumption of liquor. Thus, Regulations 42-45 of this charter[153] refer to illegal distillation of wine, and Regulation 70[154] mentions two kinds of strong liquors *viz., kaṭu-madya* and *śīdhu*. We have already noted that Regulation 49 of this charter refers to the plantation of sugarcane. It is quite likely that wine was prepared from its juice. In fact, Hiuen Tsang[154A] states that the Kshatriyas enjoyed the wine from sugarcane.

At this stage we may cosider a few epigraphical references to the practice of chewing of *tāmbūla*. Thaplyal[155] refers to a terracotta sealing of the Gupta period from Kumrahar which bears the legend *tāmbōlikarmasya*. A *tāmbōlikarma* may be 'a worker in betel' as suggested by this scholar. There is a reference to betel-plants *(nāgadruma)* in the Aphsad inscription[156] of Ādityasēna attributed to the 7th century A.D. Gode[157] quotes two verses from two different epigraphs to prove the antiquity of betel in Sanskrit works. The first verse is from the Mandasōr inscription[158] of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman

of 473 A.D. This verse mentions *tāmbūla* as a part of female make up *(tāmbūla-puṣhpa-vidhinā-samalaṃkṛit=ōpi*, Text, ll.11-12). The second verse is from the Nagari inscription[159] of Dhanika, dated in 685 A.D. wherein it is implied that *tāmbūla* was used for reddening the lips *(tāmbūla-rāga-rahit-ādhara-bhāñji.....vadanāny-ari-sundarīṇām*, Text, V. 11). There is no doubt that these instances prove the use of *tāmbūla* as a cosmetic in lieu of modern lip-stick, but it is to be noted that this could be only a secondary purpose of *tāmbūla*. For, we know that the works on Indian medicine prescribe the chewing of *tāmbūla* for an entirely different purpose.

We may conclude this section with a reference to the officials in charge of the royal kitchen. Though not mentioned in the inscriptions, the kitchen of king Aśoka must have been supervised by one or more officials adept in the art of cooking. For, we cannot imagine that the task of preparing delicious dishes out of the meat of various animals and birds could be left unsupervised. A Brāhmī inscription[160] on a wooden pillar from Kirārī, palaeographically assignable to the 2nd century A.D., mentions a kitchen-officer *(mahānasika)* in the list of royal officials. In the Allahābād pillar inscription[161] of Samudragupta Harishēṇa's father Dhruvabhūti has been described as *Khādyaṭapākika*. Sircar[162] restores this word as *Khādyakūṭapākika* and states that this officer was apparently the head of the superintendents of the royal kitchen. The Talēśvara plate of Dhyutivarman, assigned to the 6th century A.D., refers to a master of cooks *(sūpakārapati)* in the list of officials to whom the charter was addressed. Co-ordination of this official with *pīlūpati*, *aśvapati*, etc., speaks of his high dignity. Lastly, a Bhārhut Buddhist pillar inscription[163] records the gift of a distributor of food *(bhatudēsaka)*.

Dress and Ornaments

Even though it is not possible to know the details of the dress and ornaments that were worn by people from the epigraphs of the period under discussion, yet they do furnish some stray information on the subject. In the post-Mauryan epigraphs we have references to cloak-makers and weavers. The Mathurā Buddha image inscription[164] of the year 22 records the installation of an image of Buddha in the monastery of the cloak-makers *(Prāvārika-vihāra)*. Another inscription[165] from the same place, dated in the year 14, records the installation of an image by the wife of a cloak-maker *(prāvārika)*. *Prāvāraka* is an upper garment and *Prāvārika* is a maker of upper garment. Thus, from these two instances we come to know that in the Kushāṇa age the dress of the common man consisted of an upper and a lower garment. Further, it seems that making of *Prāvārakas* was a prosperous craft; otherwise these craftsmen could not have afforeded costly dedications such as construction of *vihāras* and installation of images. The Nāsik cave inscription[166] of Nahapāna, dated in 119, 120 and 123 A.D., records that the king's son-in-law Ushavadāta created a perpetual endowment of 3000 Kārshāpaṇas for the sake of monks by investing the said amount in two guilds of weavers (*Kaulika-nikāya-*

srēṇi) dwelling at Gōvardhana, with the stipulation that certain essential expenses of the monks should be defrayed out of the interest on the capital invested. This again shows that the weaving of cloth was a gainful employment, which in turn suggests profuse use of cloth by people. The Mandasōr inscription[167] of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman records the construction and renovation of the temple of the Sun-god at Daśapura by the guild of silk-weavers *(paṭṭavāya-śrēṇi)*. These silk-weavers are stated to have acquired stores of wealth through their craft *(śilp- āvāptair=ddhana-samudayaiḥ,* Text, l.16). The large quantity of silk cloth produced by them and their skill and aesthetic sense are described thus: "By whom this whole surface of the earth has been adorned with silk cloth, agreeable to the touch, variegated with different colours and arrangement (of parts), and pleasing to the eye, *(sparśa[va]tā [varṇa-ā]ntara-vibhāga-chittrēṇa nētra-su[bha]gēna* [1*] *yais=sakalam=idaṁ kshititalam= alaṁkṛitaṁ paṭṭa- vastrēṇa,* V. 21). Thus, it becomes evident that silken garments of different colours and designs were profusely used in the Gupta period. From V. 20 of this record we come to know that the dress of the ladies in this period consisted of a lower and an upper garment *(vastra-yugāni)*. This verse states that a woman, though full of youth and beauty and decorated with ornaments, etc., does not look beautiful until she has put on a pair of silken garments. Therefore, the love for silken garments on the part of Indian women can be traced back to at least the Gupta period. Fortunately this is not a solitary reference to silk-weavers. For, the Talēśvara copper-plate[168] of Vishṇuvarman, assignable to the 6th century A.D. on palaeographical grounds, refers to a gift of land of 14 *drōṇa-vāpa* capacity by a silk-weaver *(Paṭṭavāyaka-dattiḥ)*. The Sañjēli copper-plate inscription[169] of Tōramāṇa refers to large quantitites of cotton *(kārppāsa-bhāṇḍa- bharaka)* and donkey-loads of cotton threads spun by the female slaves *(garddabha-bharakishu dāsīguṇṭhaṁ)*, thereby adducing the use of cotton clothes in the Gupta age. Woollen clothes were not unknown in the Gupta age. An official called *Aurṇasthānika* figures in the list of officials mentioned in the Mallasārul plates[170] of Vijayasēna, palaeographically referable to the 6th century A.D. *Aurṇa* is an adjective from *ūrṇaṁ*, meaning wool. Sircar[171] explains *ūrṇasthāna* as a wool factory and *Aurṇasthānika* as a superintendent of such a factory. Regulation 71 of Vishṇushēṇa's charter[172] refers to weavers *(Kōlika)* and dyers of clothes *(Chhimpaka)*. Lastly, the garments of Buddhist monks *(Chīvara* or *Chīvarikā)* are referred to in the Nāsik inscription[173] of *Kshatrapa* Nahapāna, the Nālandā stone inscription[174] of the reign of Yaśōvarmmadēva of the 6th century A.D. and the two grants[175] of Maitraka Dharsēna IV of the 7th century A.D.

We have no reference to ornaments of any kind in the inscriptions of Aśoka. In the post-Mauryan period too there are no direct references to ornaments, but there are references to goldsmiths and ivory workers. Thus, an inscription[176] of the Kushāṇa period, engraved on a stone bowl discovered at Mathurā, refers to the monastery of goldsmiths *(Suvarṇakāra-vihāra)*. Another epigraph[177] from the Lucknow Museum, assigned to the Scythian period, mentions a goldsmith *(sovaṇika)*. These instances show

that golden ornaments were worn by people in the post-Mauryan period. An inscription[178] from Sāñchi *stūpa* No. 1 refers to the carving work done by the workers in ivory *(daṁtakāra)* of Vidiśā. Since ornaments made of shells, bones, etc., are known right from the pre-historic times, it is quite possible that the *daṁtakāras* of Vidiśā made ornaments of ivory. In the epigraphs of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods we come across the names of certain ornaments. In the Bilsaḍ stone pillar inscription[179] of Kumāragupta I, dated in 415-16 A.D., a staircase is compared to a pearl necklace of the kind called *Kubērachchhanda*. Necklaces are styled as *hāra* in the Mandasōr inscription[180] of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman, dated in 473-74 A.D. A golden necklace *(suvarṇa-hāra)* is mentioned in l.11 of this record.[181] The Māliyā copper-plate grant of Dharasēna II, dated in 571-72 A.D., refers to the 'Jewels in the locks of hair on the tops of the heads of his enemies' as *Chūḍāmaṇi* (Text, l.3) or *Chūḍāratna* (Text, l.11). Mention is also made of the pearl ornaments *(śravaṇa-nihita-mauktik-ālaṁkāra,* Text, l.29) in the case of Dhruvasēna IV,[182] while the bracelets on the forearm of Dhruvasēna III[183] are called *Kaṭaka*.

Entertainments

Hunting of wild animals which was a means of livelihood for the early man served also as a means of entertainment even after man became civilized and learnt the art of agriculture. R.E. VIII[184] informs us that for a long time past kings were in the habit of going out on *vihāra-yātrās* or pleasure tours, where they enjoyed chase and other similar diversions and that Aśoka replaced these by *Dhamma-yātrās* or tours for *Dhamma* since the tenth year of his reign when he visited Saṁbodhi, that is, the place where Buddha obtained enlightenment. What Aśoka gives us here to understand is that until the tenth year, he, like all other kings, used to go out on pleasure excursions, the most pre-eminent of which, however, was hunting. Thus, hunting was a popular pastime in the days of Aśoka. For the post-Mauryan period we have no epigraphical references to hunting. Of the Gupta period we have a solitary instance of hunting in the Haṛāhā inscription[185] of the Maukhari king Īśānavarman, dated in 554 A.D. This record states that Sūryavarman, the son of Īśānavarman, while hunting *(mṛigayā-gatēna,* text, l.20) saw a dilapidated temple of Śiva and had it rebuilt. Though we have not come across references to hunting in the epigraphs of the Imperial Guptas, their coins clearly show that hunting was practised in the Gupta age. Thus, one of the coin types of Samudragupta is termed the 'Tiger type'[186] wherein the king is depicted on the obverse as trampling on a tiger which falls backwards as he shoots with a bow. Likewise, Chandragupta II and Kumāragupta I have a coin type called 'Lion-slayer.'[187] Here again these kings are depicted as shooting lion on the obverses of these coins. Kumāragupta I has another coin type known as 'Tiger-slayer.'[188]

Commenting on the term *samāja* occurring in R.E. I,[189] Raychaudhuri[190] summarises the views of different scholars on the subject thus: " According to Rock Edict I, Aśoka saw much offence not only in the sacrificial slaughter of animals, but also in certain

Samājas or festive gatherings which, as we learn from *Kauṭilya*, were often witnessed by kings and emperors. The *Samāja*, says Smith, was of two kinds. The popular festival kind accompanied by animal fights, heavy drinking and feasting, including much consumption of meat, was necessarily condemned by Aśoka, as being inconsistent with his principles. The other kind, the semi-religious theatrical performance, sometimes given in the temple of Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, was apparently not included among offensive *Samājas*. Dr. Thomas describes the disapproved *Samāja* as 'a celebration of games or contests taking place in an arena or amphitheatre surrounded by platforms *(mañcha)* for spectators *(prekshā)*.' Thus, it becomes evident that at least two types of carnivals were being held for the entertainment of people in the days of Aśoka.

Of the post-Mauryan period, the Hāthigumphā inscription[191] of Khāravela, belonging to the 1st century B.C. informs us that the king arranged festivities and assemblies to entertain the residents of the capital, and that these festivities consisted of dancing, singing and instrumental music. The relevant text passage in l.5 of this record runs thus : *dapa-nata-gīta-vādita-saṁdaṁsanāhi usava-samāja-kārāpanāhi cha kiḍāpayati nagariṁ.* Sircar[192] takes the word *dapa* occurring in this passage to mean either 'a kind of wrestling' or 'comics'. But Shashi Kant[193] takes this word to mean folk-dance and comments : "The context does not allow the interpretation of *dapa* as acrobatics or combats. All the four (*i.e., dapa, nata, gīta* and *vādita)* should relate to the *gandharva-vidyā*." The interpretation of the second scholar seems to be a better one.

Epigraphs of the subsequent period have no references to such festive gatherings. But the literary sources of this period attest to their prevalence.

Music and dance were the other means of entertainment. Aśokan inscriptions do not refer to these arts, but in the subsequent periods we have some references to them. Thus, a Mathurā inscription,[194] assigned to the post-Mauryan period, records the gift of a dancer *(nataka)* named Phaguyasa. As has been noted already, the Hāthigumphā inscription of Khāravela refers to folk and classical dances *(dapa* and *nata)* and vocal and instrumental music *(gīta* and *vādita)*. But, what is important is the fact that Khāravela himself is stated to have been well-versed in music *(gandharva-veda-budho)*. Thus, it stands to reason that dance and music were encouraged by Khāravela. In the Junāgaḍh inscription[195] of 150 A.D., King Rudradāman is described as well-versed in the art of music *(gāndharva)*. Therefore, he too, like Khāravela, must have patronised music and dance.

In the Allahābād pillar inscription[196] Samudragupta is described as having put to shame Tumburu, Nārada and others by the graces of his musical performances *(gāndharvva-lalitair=vriḍita.....Tumburu-Nāradādēḥ....* l ... Text, l.27). Though this is an exaggerated statement, there is no doubt that Samudragupta was well-versed in music, for on the obverse of his Lyrist type coins[197] this king is depicted as playing lyre or lute *(vīṇā)* which lies on his knees. Verse 11 of the Mandasōr inscription[198] of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman, dated in 473-74 A.D., refers to the residential

buildings as resounding with the notes of music *(gāndharvva-śabda- mukharāṇi)*, while V. 16[199] informs us that some of the silk-weavers at Daśapura were intensely attached to music so pleasing to the ear *(Śravaṇa-subhagē gāndharvvē=nye)*. Skandagupta too seems to have been conversant with music. Commenting on the two words, *tāna* and *dhiḍā* occurring in V. 2 of the undated Bhitarī inscription[200] of Skandagupta, Bhandarkar[201] states: "These are terms apparently technical to the Indian science of music. And if I have rightly understood this line, Skandagupta was well conversant with music a conclusion which need not surprise us as we know that his great grandfather, Samudragupta, was an accomplished musician." So far as our knowledge of music goes, *tāna* is the rendering of the notes of a particular melody *(rāga)* in quick succession in contrast to *ālāpa* which means slow building up of a *rāga* by dwelling on each of its notes. As regards the word *dhiḍā*, we can only point out that the letters *dhā* and *dhin* are included in the group of letters that are used to represent various sounds produced on a percussion instrument, the others being, *nā, tin, ton, trika*, etc. In the Mandasōr inscription[202] of Yaśōdharman and Vishnuvardhana, dated in 533-34 A.D., there is a reference to singing by poets *(Kavibhir=udita-rāgam gīyatē*, Text, ll.14-15). Fleet[203] renders this phrase as 'sung with great pleasure by poets'. We would like to suggest that in this context the word *rāga* may also mean a musical melody. All these instances clearly prove that the Gupta monarchs were great lovers and patrons of music. Therefore, we may safely hold that music was an important item of entertainment in the Gupta age.

We have a solitary reference to music and dance in the Bhadrēṇiyaka grant[204] of the Maitraka king Śīlāditya I, dated in 610-11 A.D. In this record vocal and instrumental music and dance *(vādya-gīta-nṛity-ādy-arthē;* Text, ll.20-21) are included in the list of various services that were maintained in the Sun-temple situated in the village of Bhadrēṇiyaka, for defraying the expenses of which (services) certain lands were granted.

Bloch[205] states thus about one of the caves on the Rāmgar hill: "The Sītābengā cave on the Rāmgaṛh Hill evidently was not the abode of pious ascetics void of all worldly attachments, but we may safely conclude that it was a place where poetry was recited love songs were sung and theatrical performances acted. In short we may look upon it as an Indian theatre of the 3rd century B.C." He further discusses how the arrangement of the cave was suitable for the theatrical performances.

This reference to theatrical performances brings us to a family of actors mentioned in a Jaina inscription[206] of the Kushāṇa period from Mathurā. Commenting on the word *śailālakānaṁ* occurring in the fourth line of this epigraph, Bühler writes: "Finally another very interesting point in this inscription is the statement that the dedicators of the stone were the 'sons of those *śailālakas* who were famous as the Chāndaka brothers. It is impossible to interpret *śailālaka* otherwise then as a synonym of *śailālin*, which according to Pāṇini IV, 3, 110, originally was a name of those actors who studied the *Sūtras* of Śilālin, and according to the *koshas* was used later to denote any actor.

Our inscription, therefore teaches us that Mathurā had its actors in the first or second century of our era, and makes us actually acquainted with the name of such a troup. It further shows that play-acting was then as in the present day the business of particular families -a fact which may also be inferred from the introduction to several Sanskrit dramas where the *naṭī* is sometimes called the wife of the *sūtradhāra*, and his brothers are mentioned as actors".[207]

At the end of this section we may note a reference to a playground occurring in the Bhāvanagar plates[208] of the Maitraka Dharasēna III dated in the (Gupta-Valabhī) Saṁvat 304. In this record a playground is mentioned as a boundary mark *(Khēlapāṭyā-pūrvvataḥ*, Text, l.33) of a grant-land in the village of Ḍabhaka. It seems this play-ground was a fairly big one and known well enough to form a boundary mark of a grant-land.

Public utility works

Throughout the period under discussion rulers, officials, merchants, etc., undertook different kinds of philanthropic works aimed at public utility. These works, recorded in the inscriptions, can be classified under three heads: (1) Construction of and repairs to water sources such as tanks, wells, etc. and planting of trees; (2) Establishing alms-houses and (3) Providing medical facilities.

Two of the Aśokan inscriptions record the various philanthropic activities of the emperor. Thus, R.E. II[209] states that on the roads wells were caused to be dug, and trees were planted for the use of cattle and men. Similarly in P.E. VII[210] Aśoka states that he caused banyan trees to be planted on the roads in order that they might afford shade to cattle and men and caused mango-groves to be planted. It is further stated in this record that at intervals of eight *kōs* wells were caused to be dug and flights of steps (for descending into the water) were caused to be built, and numerous drinking places *(āpāna)* were caused to be established, here and there, for the enjoyment of cattle and men. From the Queen's Pillar Edict[211] we come to know that Aśoka's second Queen Kāruvākī made gifts of mango-groves, gardens and alms-houses. Here we may also note that according to the Junāgaḍh inscription[212] of Rudradāman the Sudarśana lake was provided with conduits *(praṇālis)* by the Yavana king Tushāshpa. This was done at the instance of Aśoka.

Of the post-Mauryan period, the Hāthigumphā inscription[213] of Khāravela informs us that, in his first regnal year, the king got repaired the gates, the walls and the buildings of the city , which had been damaged by storm; the embankments of the lake Khibīra Rishi, and of other tanks and cisterns, as well as the gardens were got restored by him. Kushāṇa epigraphs too record the construction of several wells, tanks, etc. Thus, for instance, the Zeda inscription[214] of Kanishka of the year 11 records the gift of a *toyaṁḍa* (a well or a tank) by Hipe Dhia, and the Ārā inscription[215] of Kanishka II records the digging of a well by Dashafota.

The Kshatrapa rulers were greatly interested in the works of public utility as can be known from their epigraphs. The Nāsik Cave inscription[216] of the time of Nahapāna (119-24 A.D.) describes Ushavadāta, the son-in-law of the king as having constructed quadrangular rest-houses *(chatusālāvasadha-pratiśraya)* at Bharukachha, Daśapura, Govardhana and Śorpāraga, and wells, tanks and gardens, *(ārāma-taḍāga-udapāna);* to have established free ferries by boats on the rivers Ibā, Pāradā, etc. *(nāvā-puṇya-tara-kareṇa);* and to have erected on both banks of these rivers shelters for meeting and such for gratuitious distribution of water (*etāsāṁ cha nadīnāṁ ubhatōtīraṁ sabhā-prapa-kareṇa*, Text, ll.2-3). The Junnar Cave inscription[217] of the time of the same king records the construction of a pond or a well *(poḍhi)* and a rest-house *(maṇḍapa)* by Aryamna, the *Amātya* of the king. Similarly, the Mathurā stone inscription[218] of the time of *Mahākshatrapa* Śoṇḍāsa records the construction of a tank *(pushkaraṇi)*, a reservoir *(udapāna)* and a grove *(ārāma)* by the treasurer of the king. Perhaps, the greatest work of public utility carried out in the Kshatrapa rule was that of the reparis to the Sudarśana-lake which is the theme of the Junāgaḍh inscription[219] of Rudradāman. This epigraph narrates in detail how this beautiful lake *(Sudarśana)* was destroyed by a storm, and all the water having escaped, became extremely ugly to look at *(durdarśana)* and how it was restored and made more beautiful than before *(Sudarśanatara)* by Rudradāman, under whom this work was carried out by the provincial governor Suviśākha.

This lake was once again repaired in the reign of Skandagupta. The Junāgaḍh inscription[220] of this king, dated in 455-56 A.D., records how a vast breach in the barrier of this lake was filled up and its embankment renewed under the orders of Chakrapālita after two months' work. Besides this major work, there are several other instance of construction of tanks, wells, etc., in the Gupta period. Thus, for example, the Mandasōr inscription[221] of 467-68 A.D. records the construction of a *stūpa, kūpa* (well), *prapā* (charitable water stall) and an *ārāma* (garden or rest-house) by Dattabhaṭa, the Commander of the forces of King Prabhākara; another fragmentary inscription[222] from the same place, assignable to the 5th century A.D., records the excavation of a tank in the suburbs of Daśapura by *Mahārāja* Gauri who is credited with construction of several wells, tanks and halls (*yēna kūpās=taṭākāni maṇḍapāś=cha manōha[rāḥ]*, Text, l.8); and the Sirōlī inscription[223] of Śarvavarman, ascribed to the 6th century A.D., records the construction of a water- reservoir *(pānīya-saṁgraha)* by Naravarman. In the Palitānā plates[224] of Gārulaka Siṁhāditya, dated in 574 A.D., his father Varāhadāsa is stated to have built many temples, halls, drinking fountains, gardens, rest-houses and monasteries *(anēka-dēvatāyatana-sabhā-prap-ārām-āvasatha-vihāra kārayitā*, Text, ll.12-13).

In the subsequent period Queen Kōṇadēvī, wife of King Ādityasēna, is known to have constructed three tanks. Two have been referred to in the Mandara hill inscriptions[225] and one in the Aphsaḍ inscription,[226] all belonging to the 7th century A.D.

Charitable feeding has been considered a meritorious act by Indians since very early times. We have already noted that Aśoka's second queen Kāruvāki established alms-houses *(dāna-gaha)*. The Gadhā inscription[227] of the time of *Mahākshatrapa* Rudrasēna, dated in 205 (or 204) A.D., records the establishment of an alms-house *(satra)*. The Mathurā Brāhmī inscription[228] of 106 A.D., belonging to the reign of Huvishka, records the establishment of a *Puṇyaśālā* which provided food items like groats, salt, green vegetables, etc., to destitute people *(anāthānāṁ kṛitēna)*. As many as four epigraphs of the Imperial Guptas record the establishment of alms-houses. Incidentally, all of them come from Gadhwā in the Allahabad District, U.P. The earliest of them[229] belongs to the reign of Chandragupta II and is dated in 407-08 A.D. Each of the two parts of this epigraph, records a gift of ten *dīnāras*, apparently as a contribution to the perpetual maintenance of a *sattra* or alms-house. The remaining three inscriptions[230] belong to the reign of Kumāragupta I, and all the three record the arrangements made for the maintenance of alms-houses like the above mentioned record. Lastly, one of the purposes for which the Maitraka king Drōṇasiṁha granted a village, in his Bhamodra Mohota Plate,[231] was the maintenance of an alms-house *(satr-ōpayōjyē)*.

Though not considered a basic human need, medical facility too is as vital as food, clothes, house, etc., for human life. Such being the case medical facilities of some kind or other must have been available to man in all times and places. We have only a few references to medical facilities occurring in the epigraphs of the period under discussion. We have earlier mentioned the charitable works of Aśoka. But nothing could be as important as the provisions made by him for the medical treatment of men and animals. R.E. II[232] states that throughout his dominions Aśoka established medical faciltities for men and beasts, and wherever there were no herbs that were used for treating men and animals, everywhere they were caused to be imported and planted. The post-Mauryan inscriptions have nothing to state on this subject. However, references to physicians *(vaidya)* in two of the Buddhist cave inscriptions[233] from Kaṇhēri and Kuḍā and to Royal physician *(rājavaidya)* in the Pitalkhōrā Buddhist cave inscriptions,[234] suggest that some sort of arrangements were made for the medical treatment of the general public as well.

We have a very interesting epigraphical evidence regarding the medical failities, furnished by an unique terracotta sealing[235] recovered at Kumrahāra near Patna. This sealing in Sanskrit language is assignable to the 4th-5th century A.D. on palaeographical grounds. Sahai[236] writes thus about this sealing: "The inscription on the sealing reads *'Śrī-ārōgyavihārē bhikṣu-saṁghasya'* (the sealing of the monastic community in the sanatorium monastery), attesting to the existence of a monastery-cum-sanatorium at Kumarahāra *(i. e.* Pāṭaliputra) and it is quite possible, as pointed out by the late A.S. Altekar, one of the monasteries at Kumrahāra might have been the 'Ārōgya-vihāra' referred to in the inscription on the sealing. The Buddhist monasteries are well known to have maintained hospitals or sanatoria; but this is the first sealing of its kind yet

discovered belonging to a monastery-cum-sanatorium. This appears to be a striking confirmation of Fa-hien's account of free hospitals in Pāṭaliputra during the reign period of Chandragupta II Vikramāditya". That medical facilities were made available in the Buddhist vihāras is also borne out by the Maitraka charters. Thus, the Wala plate[237] of Guhasēna, dated in the year 246, recording the grant of certain villages by the king for the maintenance of the Duḍḍāmahāvihāra, mentions *bhaishajya* (medical treatment) as one of the facilities to be provided to the members of the *bhikshu-saṁgha*, others being food, clothing, etc. Again, two fragmentary charters[238] of Dharasēna IV, recording grants to the same *vihāra*, mention *bhaishajya* in the same context.

Thus, all the above cited instances tend to impress that, throughout the period under review, rulers, officials and rich people were full of concern for the general public, especially for the poor class in the society and they endeavoured to do whatever they could to make the life of the common man a comfortable one.

At this stage it is worthwhile to note the observations of the two Chinese travellers on the topic so far discussed. Speaking of the medical facilities in the 'Middle-Kingdom' and other regions, Fa-hien[239] states: "The heads of the Vaiśya families in them establish in the cities houses for dispensing charity and medicines. All the poor and destitute in the country , orphans, widowers, and childless men, maimed people and cripples, and all who are diseased, go to those houses, and are provided with every kind of help, and doctors examine their diseases. They get the food and medicines which their cases require, and are made to feel at ease; and when they are better, they go away of themselves." Hiuen-Tsang, who visited India about two hundred years after Fa-hien, also attests to the existence of Charity houses in the area between Takka (a region in the Punjab) and Mathurā. He writes[240] : "On from this country there were numerous Puṇyaśālās or free rest-houses for the relief of the needy, and distressed; at these houses medicines and food were distributed and so travellers having their bodily wants supplied, did not experience inconvenience." At another place, describing a city on the east side of the Ganges, this traveller[241] writes : "Pious kings erected Puṇyaśālās in the district for the free distribution of dainty food and medical requisites to the kinless and friendless". Further he[242] states that Harshavardhana 'established Travellers Rests through all his dominions'.

We conclude this section with a brief discusion of the two unique epigraphs of the 3rd centwy B.C., *viz.*, the Mahāsthān fragmentary stone plaque inscription and the Sohgaurā bronze plaque inscription. We qualify them unique, because throughout the period under discussion we have not come across a single record solely referring to famine relief measures which is the theme of these two records. Bhandarkar[243] sums up the contents of the Mahāsthān plaque inscription thus: "It appears that some ruler of the Mauryan period, if not of the Mauryan family, has issued an order to the Mahāmātras stationed at Puṇḍranagara with a view to relieve the distress caused, apparently, by famine to the people called Saṁvaṁgiyas, who were settled in and about the town. Two

measures appear to have been adopted to meet this contingency. The exact nature of the first is not clear as the first original line of our record has not been preserved. But it may be surmised that this measure consisted of the advance of a loan in *gaṃḍaka* coins to Goldana, who presumably, was a leader of the Saṃvaṃgiyas. The Mahāmātra of Puṇḍranagara was entrusted with the execution of this order. The second measure consisted of distribution of *dhānya* or paddy from the granary. A wish is then expressed that as soon as these measures are carried out, the Saṃvaṃgiyas will be able to tide over the calamity. With the restoration of profusion and affluence they have been asked to return the coins to the treasury and corn to the granary, in other words, to pay the State back in kind and cash."

Jayaswal[244] holds that both the Sohgaurā and Mahāsthān records belong to the reign of Chandragupta Maurya when repeated droughts occurred, according to the Jaina theological history. But Sircar,[245] referring to the former record, states that there is no reason to believe that it is earlier than Aśoka. The Sohgaurā inscription[246] records the order of the Mahāmātras of Śrāvasti that the contents of the store-houses of Trivēṇī and four other places should be distributed to the tenants, only on the advent of drought.

About both these records Jayaswal[247] states that they "have as their subject-matter *koṭhāgāla (kōshṭh-āgāra)* which is used in the Kauṭalīya Arthaśāstra as a technical term for state store-houses for keeping *dravya* and grains and refer to *ātyayika* (distress)".

Thus, these two records show how Ancient Indian states had formulated far-sighted policy to face unforseen circumstances like famine.

Place names and personal names

The study of place names and personal names, which is an important branch of Indological studies, is gaining momentum under the auspices of the Place Names Society of India which has conducted a number of annual conferences and published valuable research papers on the subject. This is a vast subject requiring special study. Here we would like to notice at random only a few names of places and persons, in order to merely indicate how important this branch of study will be for augmenting our knowledge of Indian social history.

How the personal names can throw light on the religious conditions of a particular region and time is illustrated in the names occurring in the votive inscriptions[248] from the Sāñchi *stūpas*. These names clearly attest to the influence of Buddhism on the Vedic and Paurāṇic religions in the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. A large proportion of the names, *e.g.* Araha, Arahaka, Arahadāsa, Arahapālita, Dhamaguta, Budhila, Saṃgharakhita, etc., is decidedly Buddhist. Another group of proper names, *e.g.* Asāḍa, Mula, Phaguna, Pusiṇi, Svatiguta, etc., has been derived from the names of Nakshatras, and points to the conclusion that the rule of some Gṛihyasūtras, which recommend the use of *nakshatranāmāni*, was practically obeyed. There are further some names such as Agisima (Agniśarmā), Bahadata

(Brahmadatta), Mitā, Visvadeva, Yamarakhitā, which are closely connected with the ancient Vedic religion; and some, Nāgā, Nāgila, Nāgadatta, and so forth, bear witness to the existence of the snake worship, which was common to the Brahmanical and the heterodox sects. Finally, the names Vinhukā, an abbreviation for Vishṇudattā or Vishṇurakshitā, Upidadata or Opedadata (Upēndradatta), Balaka and Balamitra (connected with one of the heroes of the legend of Krishṇa and Baladēva or Balarāma, who is also called Bala), furnish evidence for the development of Vaishṇavism, while Nadiguta *(Nandigupta)*, Sāmidata (Svāmi-, i.e. Kumāra-datta), Sivanandi (Śivanandi) do the same service to Śaivism. It is also possible that Isadata and Himadata are likewise Śaiva names.

Bühler[249] thus explains the occurrence of these non-Buddhistic names in this context: "The occurrence among the Buddhists of names connected with the ancient Vedic religion, as well as of such as are connected with Vaishṇavism and Śaivism, in these early inscriptions, has no doubt to be explained by the assumption that their bearers or their ancestors adhered to these creeds before their conversion, and that they received their names in accordance with the established custom of their families. The rules regarding the giving of names were probably then, as lax among the Buddhists as they are in the present day among the heterodox sects in India, which by no means restrict themselves to the lists of their particular saints or deities. Their historical value consists therein that they form a link in the chain of evidence which enables us to trace the existence, nay the prevalence of Vaishṇavism and Śaivism, not only during the third century B.C., but during much earlier times, and to give a firm support to the view now held by a number of Orientalists, according to which Vaishṇavism and Śaivism are older than Buddhism and Jainism."

There are certain solitary instances of interesting personal names. Thus, there are two inscriptions[250] of the 5th century A.D. from Mandasōr belonging to the reign of a king whose name was Gauri. It is difficult to expalin the formation of this name. In the enumeration of the donees in the Bōndā plates[251] of Mahāśiva Tivararāja, assigned to the 6th century A.D., we come across the names of Avanti-Vikram=ōpādhyāya and Lāṭa-pahaliha-svāmin. These names suggest that the families of these two Brāhmaṇas originally belonged to the Avanti and Lāṭa countries respectively. Some other names in the list, like Sthāvara, Kamalapaksha, Śilapaksha and Unnatamēgha, are not quite common. Lastly, we have an instance of a Brāhmaṇa having two names in the Jesar plates[252] of Śīlāditya III, dated in 666-67 A.D. It is clearly stated in this record that the donee of the grant was a Brāhmaṇa with two names Śaggaḷa and Prakaśa (*Śaggaḷa-Prakāśa-dvināma-Dikshitāya*, Text, l.49).

Regarding the place names, it may be noted in the first instance that the names of the *Nakshatras* were not restricted to personal names alone, but even places were named after them. Thus, a Maitraka grant[253] of 527 A.D. mentions the village Jyēshṭhānaka as the residence of the Brāhmaṇa donee; and the village, Āshāḍhaka is met with in a 6th century record.[254] At times places were named after certain outstanding geographical

features associated with them as in the cases of the village Trivēṇī occurring in the Sohgaurā inscription[255] and Trisaṅgamaka in a Maitraka charter.[256] It is not difficult to understand that both the villages must have been situated near confluences of three rivers. Place names like Nimbakūpaka and Kadambapadraka, appearing in a Maitraka record[257] of 571 A.D., and Chandanavāṭaka of a record[258] dated in 569 A.D., bear testimony to the floral influence on the place name patterns. One of Harsha's grants[259] refers to a village called Markaṭasāgara, meaning 'an ocean of monkeys'. This village seems to have been a favourite resort of numerous monkeys. In the place name Vyāghrachōraka mentioned in the Ghugrāhāti copper-plate inscription[260] of Samāchāradēva, of the 6th century A.D., we have an instance of a village haunted by tigers and thieves or a cunning tiger. Incidentally we may note that this king's name means 'one characterised by good conduct' (*samāchāra*). The village Vaiśyavāṭaka figuring in the Sohāwal copper-plate inscription[261] of Śarvanātha, dated in 510-11 A.D., seems to have had a majority of the members of the trading class (*vaiśyas*) in its population. Mention is made of a village named Śivaliṅgaka in the Ārang plates[262] of Mahāsudēvarāja. It is obvious that a popular *Śivaliṅga* in the village or in its vicinity must have given rise to this place name. Daśapura, the ancient name of Mandasōr seems to have been the headquarters of an administrative unit comprising ten towns (*daśa-pura*). It is difficult to explain the toponym Kōṭivarsha occurring in the Dāmōdarpur records[263] of the Gupta kings. It seems that either the place was believed to be crores of years old or its name expressed the pious desire that it should last for a very long period. A more likely possibility is that the name owes itself to the geographical feature in and around this town, for the prefix *kōṭi* means, among other things, 'end or top', 'edge or point', the 'highest point', 'eminence', etc. (See Williams, p. 312). Lastly, we have an epigraphical reference proving the antiquity of a modern place name in the Hātun Rock inscription[264] of Paṭōladēva, of about the 6th- 7th century A.D. In the fourth line of this epigraph occurs the place name Giligittā for Gilgit (Hātūn is situated in the former Gilgit Agency). Thus, it becomes evident that the place name Gilgit was known in the same phonetical form over twelve hundred years ago.

Thus, the place names and personal names occurring in the epigraphs of the period under study throw light on the various aspects of contemporary social life.

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134. *Ibid.*
135. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
136. *C.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 20 ff.
137. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 167 and 171.
138. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 269, Text, l.2.
139. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 264 ff.
140. *Ibid.*, Vol. XX, p. 44.
141. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. II, pp. 217 ff.
142. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 172 and 175.
143. *C.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 2 ff.
144. *Ibid.*, pp. 130 ff.
145. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 325.
146. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 154.
147. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, p. 178.
148. *KAS.*, pp. 120 ff.
149. *C.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 1 ff.
150. V.A. Smith, *Asoka*, p. 159.
151. *LGA.*, p. 122.
152. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 324.
153. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, p. 175.
154. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
154A. *Watters.*, Vol. I, p. 178.
155. *SAIS.*, pp. 241-42.
156. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 203, Text l.11.
157. P.K. Gode, *SICḤ.*, pp. 114-15.
158. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), pp. 325-26.
159. *Bhārata-Kaumudī*, part I, p. 274.
160. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 152 ff.

161. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 215, Text, l.32.
162. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, p. 268, n. 1.
163. *List.*, No. 812.
164. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIX, p. 66, No. I.
165. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
166. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 164 ff.
167. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, (Rev.), No. 35.
168. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. II, pp. 217 ff.
169. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XL, pp. 175 ff.
170. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 159, Text, l.4.
171. D.C. Sircar, *IE(S).*, p. 360.
172. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, p. 178.
173. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 164 ff.
174. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XX, pp. 37 ff.
175. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 219 ff.
176. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 67-68, No. VI.
177. *Ibid.*, Vol. X, p. 118, No. XII.
178. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 378, No. C. 189.
179. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 269, Text, l.10.
180. *Ibid.*, p. 326, Text, l.18.
181. *Ibid.*, p. 325, Text, l.11.
182. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 175.
183. *Ibid.*, p. 176, Text, l.38.
184. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 14-15.
185. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIV, pp. 110 ff.
186. J. Allan, *CCGDS.*, p. 17, No. 48, Plate II. 14.
187. *Ibid.*, p. 41, No. 114, Plate IX. 3; p. 18, No. 242, Plate XIV. 13.
188. *Ibid.*, p. 81. No. 243, Plate XIV. 14.
189. *C.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 1-2.
190. *PHAI.*, p. 334.
191. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XX, pp. 71 ff.

192. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, p. 219, n. 6.
193. Shashi Kant, *KA.*, p. 57, n. 2.
194. *List.*, No. 100.
195. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 36 ff.
196. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 1.
197. *CCGDS.*, p. 19, No. 53, Plate V. 4.
198. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 325, Text, l.7.
199. *Ibid.*, Text, l.9.
200. *Ibid.*, p. 315, Text, l.8.
201. *Ibid.*, p. 316, n. 6.
202. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 153.
203. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-57.
204. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 116 ff.
205. *ASIAR.*, 1903-04, p. 126.
206. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, p. 390.
207. *Ibid.*, p. 381.
208. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 181 ff.
209. *C.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 2 ff.
210. *Ibid.*, pp. 130 ff.
211. *Ibid.*, pp. 158-59.
212. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 36 ff.
213. *Ibid.*, Vol. XX, pp. 71 ff.
214. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 1 ff.
215. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV, pp. 130 ff.
216. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 78 ff.
217. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 172-73.
218. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IX, pp. 246 ff.
219. See No. 212 above.
220. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 28.
221. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 12 ff.
222. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 127 ff.

223. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXVIII, Pt. 57-58.
224. *Ibid.*, Vol. XI, pp. 16 ff.
225. *IMLGPY.*, p. 167.
226. *Ibid.*, pp. 160 ff.
227. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVI, pp. 236 ff.
228. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 55 ff.
229. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No.7.
230. *Ibid.*, Nos. 8, 64 and 66.
231. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVI, pp. 17 ff.
232. *C.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 2 ff.
233. *List.*, Nos. 984 and 1048.
234. *Ibid.*, Nos. 1190-93.
235. B. Sahai, *IB.*, p. 38.
236. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
237. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 338 ff.
238. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 219 ff.
239. *Legge.*, p. 79.
240. *Watters.*, Vol. I, p. 286.
241. *Ibid.*, p. 328.
242. *Ibid.*, p. 344.
243. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, p. 87.
244. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXII, p. 3.
245. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, p. 82, n. 1.
246. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXII, pp. 1 ff.
247. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
248. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 87 ff.
249. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
250. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 120 ff.
251. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 111 ff.
252. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 208 ff.
253. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 105 ff.

254. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXII, pp. 15 ff.
255. *Ibid.*, pp. 1 ff.
256. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVI, pp. 17 ff.
257. *Ibid.*, Vol. XI, pp. 80 ff.
258. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 79 ff.
259. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 208 ff.
260. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 74 ff.
261. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 127 ff.
262. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 18 ff.
263. *Ibid.*, Vol. XV, pp. 113 ff.
264. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 226 ff.

CHAPTER V

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Economic conditions of a country depend on the type of administration that prevails and the industry or otherwise of its people. An able administration aiming at the welfare of its people, and an entetprising people with vast scope for their activities, contribute to the material prosperity of a nation. Both factors were present in North India during the period of our study. The epigraphs of this period contain a good deal of information on the various aspects of the economic life such as agriculture, trade and industries, other professions and guilds and their activities. Yet, a complete picture of economic life still eludes historians. Perhaps no source of history is free from its intrinsic limitations.

Agriculture

Agriculture has been the most important occupation of mankind since the day of its invention in the pre-historic period. Under this heading we propose to discuss all matters pertaining to land and agriculture, ownership of land, types and rates of land, land irrigation, land revenue, etc. We have to note in this connection that we come to know from epigraphs many things of land and agriculture except the agricultural operations. For example, we do not know the types of implements used for tilling the land, the types of manures, if at all they were used, the mode of harvesting the crops, and so on.

One of the oft-discussed and unsettled topics of socio-economic history of ancient India is the ownership of land. Scholars have discussed this problem at length on the basis both of literary and epigraphical sources, but the problem is still open to discussion. It is beyond our scope to take up the criticism of the divergent views of the earlier writers on the subject. Therefore, we straight away proceed to see what the epigraphs of our period have to state on the subject.

According to Saletore whose views are based on the accounts of the Greek writers and the *Arthaśāstra*, in the Mauryan period all land belonged to the king. He writes : "The Greek writers, dealing with pre-Gupta times, invariably state that

all land belonged to the king."[1] Discussing Kautalya's view on this subject, he further writes : "From these words of Kautalya it may be inferred that according to him all land belonged to the king; lands cultivated could be granted to cultivators only for life so that they might not be lost to the king; and uncultivated lands could also be given provided that the cultivators found themselves to pay the requisite revenue to the State".[2] This scholar also states at another place that the precepts of Kauṭilya were carried out in practice by Aśoka.[3] Therefore, it is reasonable to hold that all land belonged to the State under the emperor Aśoka too. Of course, we are only quoting one of the views on the question of the ownership of land as a preamble to our study and not actually subscribing to it. Now, the only epigraph of Aśoka having something to state about land revenue is the Rummindēi pillar inscription.[4] This record informs us that because the Buddha was born there, the village of Lumbinī was exempted from a tax called *bali* and its regular land revenue was fixed at one-eighth of the produce by Aśoka on his visit to the place. This was actually a reduction of the rate of land revenue, for normally the king's share of the land produce was one-sixth in the Mauryan period.[5] This piece of information is of no help with regard to the problem of ownership of land, for it does not let us know in what capacity the king collected a share of the land produce. Did he do it as the owner of all land or did the farmers pay a share of their produce as they were being protected by the king? The inscription in question does not provide the answer.

Epigraphs of the Kushāṇa period hardly refer to subjects like land and agriculture. It is only one or two Kshatrapa inscriptions that have some bearing on this subject. The Junāgaḍh inscription of Rudradāman[6] refers to *bali, śulka, bhōga, kara, vishṭi* and *praṇaya*, all of which are known to Kauṭilya. But there is nothing about the ownership of land. However, the Nāsik inscription[7] of the time of Nahapāna records that his son-in-law Ushavadāta had to purchase a field from a Brāhmaṇa at the cost of 4000 *kārshāpaṇas* for the purpose of donating it to the Buddhist monks. Another inscription[8] of the same period and from the same place records a gift of a field by Dharmanandin for providing clothes to Buddhist monks. Two of the Junnar inscriptions[9] furnish significant instances of private transfer of land and of a gift of small units of agricultural land, occupied by private individuals. All these instances seem to show that private ownership of land existed in the post-Mauryan period. But the number of such instances fall too short to prove anything when compared to the total bulk of the epigraphical material pertaining to this period. Besides, these instances appear weak in the face of the concept of the divinity of kingship which is too conspicuous in the epigraphs of the alien rulers, the Kshatrapas and the Kushāṇas. The inscriptions of the time of Nahapāna record gifts of a number of villages by the king's son-in-law Ushavadāta, in favour of temples, Brāhmaṇas and the Buddhist order. Thus, in one of the Nāsik inscriptions[10] he is stated to have given sixteen villages to the gods

and Brāhmaṇas (*dēvatābhyaḥ brāhmaṇēbhyaś=cha shōḍaśagrāmadēna*, Text, l.1). Gift of another village is mentioned in this very record (*triṇi cha gōsahasrāni datāni grāmō cha*, Text, l.4). Likewise, a Kārle Cave inscription[11] of the same ruler describes Ushavadāta as a giver of sixteen villages and refers to the gift of the village Karajika. It does not seem reasonable to hold that Ushavadāta would have purchased a number of villages for granting them for religious purposes. On the other hand, these instances show that under the Kshatrapa rule members of the royal family were assigned a number of villages with the right of alienation. We have a concrete instance of this kind of assignment in an inscription[12] of Gautamiputra Śātakarṇi, the conqueror of Nahapāna, referring to a field that was formerly enjoyed by Ushavadāta (*grāmē aparakakhatyāṁ yat kshētraṁ adyakālakṛtyaṁ Ṛishabhadattēna bhuktaṁ*). From this record it becomes evident that not only the whole of villages but also specific fields in certain villages were assigned to the members of the royal family. Thus, these instances are in favour of the ownership of land by the king.

Though it has been suggested by Sharma[13] that in all likelihood it was under the Kushānas that the practice of making grants according to the *akshayanivi* tenure was extended to land in northern India, it is only from the Gupta period that we come across the actual instances of such grants. Epigraphs of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods abound in copper-plate charters recording grants of land and villages. Since most of these grants were made to the learned Brāhmaṇas who were not agriculturists themselves, it is somewhat difficult to know about the ownership of land from these grants. However, the terms and conditions governing these grants throw some light on the question of the ownership of land.

An important point that deserves serious consideration, pertaining to the problem of the ownership of land, is the fact that the land grants were generally made by the kings and the royal personages and whenever private individuals desired to make such grants they had to obtain the land by applying to the local government and by depositing the specified amount as evidenced from the Dāmōdarpur copper-plate inscriptions. A list of some of the land grants made by the kings is given by Maity.[14] In these grants it is stated that the peasants should pay in future the specified land taxes like *bhāga, bhōga*, etc., to the donee in whose favour the land was granted, instead of the king. Such grants only implied transfer of revenue from the state to the donee, and there is nothing in these charters to indicate that the donee became the owner of the land granted to him.

Now, let us consider the conditions which the donees were required to fulfil with regard to the lands granted to them. Both Nālandā and Gayā copper-plate inscriptions[15] of Samudragupta clearly state that the tax-paying cultivators, artisans, etc., from other villages should not be allowed to enter the villages granted as *agrahāras* by means of these charters, failing which there would be a forfeiture of the *agrahāras* (*na ch=aitāḥ=prabhrity=anēna ttraividyēn=ānya-grām-ādi-karaḍa-kuṭumbi-kāruk-ādayaḥ=*

pravēśayitavyāḥ n-ānyathā niyatam=agrahār-ākshēpaḥ syād=iti, Nālandā copper-plate Text ll.8-10). Though not mentioned in most of the land grants, this condition seems to have been included in the very concept of the *agrahāra* type of land grant. It clearly indicates that the donee was not free to change the tenants on the land granted to him.

Another condition accompanying the land grants is what is known as *nividharma*. The term *nividharma* occurs in the Dāmōdarpur copper-plate inscriptions[16] and cognate records. Thus, for example, Brāhmaṇa Karpaṭika in one of the Dāmōdarpur records[17] applies for a strip of waste land to be made over to him in accordance with the *nividharma*. The word *nivi* means 'the capital, principal or stock';[18] and the expression *nividharma* stands for the condition that the donee should not destroy the principal but should only enjoy the income arising from it.[19] Bhandarkar,[20] commenting on this word occurring in the Dāmōdarpur inscription just referred to writes : "And in the present instance if the phrase *nividharma* has any meaning what seems to have been done is that the Brāhmaṇa did not own the land but held it in perpetuity in exchange for the three *dināras* deposited with the State. The copper-plate does not thus actually represent the sale deed in the ordinary sense of the phrase because the State was the owner of it." Another term used *in lieu* of or along with *nividharma* is *apradā*. It also occurs in the Dāmōdarpur and kindred records. This word has been taken to be the same as *nivi* and explained as '(gift land) not to be alienated' by Sircar.[21] Another noteworthy point about these land grants is the fact that they are necessarily qualified either as *agrahāras* or as *brahmadēyas* which is suggestive of certain conditions binding such grants.

The foregoing discussion tends to show that in the Gupta age the land was owned by the king himself, that private individuals desirous of making land grants had to do so by applying to the local government and by depositing the requisite amount, and that the granting of land by the rulers was merely an arrangement made for the sustenance of the learned Brāhmaṇas who had no means of livelihood and it did not confer on them ownership of the land in the true sense of the term.

As against this evidence, the Maitraka charters recording land grants to the learned Brāhmaṇas and to the Buddhist *vihāras* seem to adduce the existence of the private ownership of land. One thing in these grants which has bearing on the question of the ownership of land is the reference to land as belonging to private individuals. The word employed here to denote the sense of possession is *satka*, explained as the Sanskritised form of the Prakrit word *santaka* meaning 'the holding of....', 'belonging to .....', by Sircar.[22] Thus, the Amreli Museum plates[23] of Dhruvasēna II, dated in 642 A.D. refer to fields belonging to two individuals, Lagujiyaka (*Lagujiyaka-satka-kshētraṁ*, Text, l.38) and Kikkaka (*Kikkaka-satka-kshētraṁ*, Text, l.40) and to two Brāhmaṇas (*Brāhmaṇa-Hastadēva-satka-kshētraṁ*, Text, l.38; *Brāhmaṇa-Karkka-satka- kshētraṁ*, Text, l.39). To quote another such instance, the Jesar plates[24] of Śīlāditya III, dated in the Valabhi Saṁvat 357, refer to fields belonging to an individual named Datka, to the cultivator (*kuṭumbin*) Bhōṭuka, jointly to the cultivators Chachcha and Mātṛila and to certain Brāhmaṇas, those granted

to the Brahmaṇas being qualified by the term *brahmadēya*. From these instances, it becomes evident that under the Maitraka rule Brāhmaṇas, cultivators and private individuals who were neither Brāhmaṇas nor cultivators could possess land. But whether it was a qualified possession as in the case of the *agrahāra* grants discussed earlier or absolute possession amounting to ownership in the true sense of the term cannot be ascertained as all the fields referred to above occur among the boundaries of plots of gift-land. Another point indicative of private ownership of land is the mention of royal domain land (*rājakīya*) in the Maitraka grants. Thus, in the Jesar plates referred to above, one item of grant was a large reservoir from the royal domain land (*rājakīyāt=pañchavinśati-bhū-pādāvartta-parisarā vāpī*, Text, l.47) and another record[25] of the same king refers to the three royal wells (*rājakīya-vāpī-traya-prachchihā*, Text, l.51) among the boundaries of a plot of grant-land. Specific references to the royal land and irrigational wells in the above instances logically prove the existence of the private ownership of land. Lastly, in most of the Maitraka charters there occurs an impreactory statement that the donee should not be obstructed while cultivating or causing to be cultivated or assigning the land granted to him (*krishatām karshayatām pradiśatām vā na kaiś=chid=vyāsēdhē varttitavyaṁ* Navalakhī plates of Śīlāditya I, Text, l.29).[26] This statement clearly shows that the donee was free to cultivate himself or cause to be cultivated or, lastly, to assign to someone the land granted to him. A somewhat ambiguous English word 'assign' has been employed by scholars[27] in rendering the Sanskrit verb *pradiś* occurring in this context. But it may be noted that this verb also means 'to give, grant, offer, bestow or confer upon' according to Apte.[28] Therefore, we may safely hold that the Brāhmaṇa donees receiving land grants from the Maitraka rulers held the right to regrant such land, which is a clear proof of the private ownership of land in the true sense of the term.

To sum up the discussion, as evidenced from the instances quoted above, under the Maitraka rule not only the king but also the cultivators, the Brāhmaṇas and others owned land and on the analogy of the Brāhmaṇas, other people could also transfer lands owned by them.

Aśokan inscriptions have no reference to land, agricultural or otherwise, and in the epigraphs of the post-Mauryan period land is referred to by the generic terms *kshētra* and *bhūmi*. But in the inscriptions of the Gupta period and onwards we get clear references to different types of land. In these references the land is broadly divided into agricultural land and homestead, and the agricultural land is further divided into cultivated land and waste land. The waste or uncultivated land was known by the terms *khila*, *khila-kshētra*, *aprahata* and *apradā*; and a cultivated field was called *vāpa-kshētra*. The last mentioned term rarely occurs during the period under study and wherever the land is not specifid as either wasteland or homestead it is to be taken as arable land. All the terms denoting the waste land and the term *vāstu* are met with in the Dāmōdarpur copper-plates referred to above and kindred records. Sircar[29] takes the word *apradā* occurring in one of the Dāmōdarpur copper-plate inscriptions (*pūrvvaṁ mayā apradā*

atisrishṭakāḥ, Text, ll.6-7) to mean land not given to anybody, i.e., unsettled lands; Bhandarkar[30] interprets this word as 'land not yielding any revenue'. We, however, feel that the technical import of the word *apradā* is 'land not to be granted, regranted or otherwise alienated' (see p. 124 above). It is interesting to note that in another charter[31] from Dāmōdarpur the two words denoting waste or uncultivated land have been simultāneously employed to qualify a plot of agricultural land (*aprad-āprahata-khila-kshētraṁ*, Text, ll.7-8). Bhandarkar's[32] note on the words *aprahata* and *khila* occurring in this context is as follows: "Sanskrit lexicons make *khila* synonymous with *aprahata*. Here, however, a distinction is sought to be made. *Aprahata* is 'fallow land', but *khila* apparently denotes 'land never tilled'. In yet another Dāmōdarpur record[33] the expression *airāvat-āgu-rājya* seems to substitute the words *aprahata* and *khila*, for this expression means 'waterless region destitute of cows'[34] and significantly the words *aprahata* and *khila* do not occur in this record.

The only expression denoting cultivated land that we have come across is *vāpa-kshētra* and it occurs in the Faridpur copper-plate inscription[35] of the time of Dharmāditya, assigned to the 6th century A.D. (*vāpa-kshētra-khaṇḍalāḥ*, Text, l.11). The word *vāpa* means sowing of seeds and the expression *vāpa-kshētra* may be explained as a field fit to be sown in. A term qualifying the cultivable land, *viz. krishṇa-tala* occurs in the Sēnakapāṭ inscription[36] of the time of Śivagupta Bālārjuna, assigned to the 7th century A.D. This word might have denoted a type of fertile land called the Black cotton soil in modern parlance.

The terms *vāstu*, *sthala-vāstu* and *griha-vāstu* denote homestead. The first of these terms occurs in the Dāmōdarpur copper-plates, the second one, in the Baigrām copper-plate inscription[37] of the [Gupta] year 128 and the last one, in the Sañjēli copper-plate[38] of *Mahārāja* Bhūta, assigned to the 6th century A.D.

Not only the Dāmōdarpur copper-plates but also a number of other charters record the grant of fallow land in the possession of the state to private individuals, against deposits of specified amounts. In all these transactions the unit of money employed is *dīnāra* and that of the land measure, *kulyavāpa*. The ratio was fixed at a specific number of *dīnāras* per *kulyavāpa*. From the rates specified per *kulyavāpa* in these grants it becomes evident that these rates differed from one locality to another. Thus, in the Sultanpur,[39] Pāhārpur,[40] Nandapur[41] and Baigrām[42] plates, and in one of the Dāmōdarpur plates,[43] we have the rate of two *dīnāras* per *kulyavāpa* (*dvidīnārikya- kulyavāpa*); in all the other Dāmōdarpur plates[44] we have the rate of three *dīnāras* per *kulyavāpa* (*tri-dīnārika-kulyavāpa*); and in the Faridpur plates[45] the rate is four *dīnāras* per *kulyavāpa* (*chatur- dīnārikya-kulyavāpa*). We can think of two possibilities to explain this disparity. Firstly, the difference might be due to the difference in the degree of fertility of land situated in different localities, and secondly, it might be due to the difference in the availability of land for grants. Thus, it may be held that wherever plenty of land was available or it was of an inferior quality, it was granted at a low price, and where the availability of land was relatively less or it was of a superior

quality, it cost comparatively a higher price. A third factor to decide the rate of land seems to have been the demand for it from the private individuals.

Almost all the land grants define the boundary marks of the grant land on its four sides *(chatur-āghāṭanas)*. These definitions often occupy a considerable portion of the copper-plates recording land grants. The boundary marks consist of the adjoining fields specified by the names of their possessors and geographical features like hillocks, ditches, streams, rivers, etc. This kind of demarcation is always necessary to avoid possible land disputes which constitute a big bulk of judicial petitions in our contry. It is quite interesting to note the method adopted in marking the boundary lines of the grant-land in ancient India. From the Baigrām plate referred to above, we come to know that the boundaries of a grant-land were marked on all the four sides with chaff and charcoal and that such marks were supposed to be permanent *(chira-kāla-sthāyi-tush-āṅgār-ādi(di)nā[m*] chihnaiś=chāturddiśō niyammya*, Text, l.19). This very method is mentioned in the Nandapur plate referred to earlier. The Mallasārul plate[46] of Vijayasēna, assigned to the 6th-7th century , states that the plot of grant-land was duly marked out by pegs *(kīlaka)*, a system that finds a parallel in the land survey of modern times, as remarked by Majumdar.[47] The pegs are said to have borne the device of *kamal-āksha-māla*, i.e., 'a string of lotus seeds'. The relevant text portiorn reads: *kīlakāś=ch=āttra kama[l-ā]ksha-māl-ānkitā(tāś=)chaturshu dikshu nyastā bhavanty=ēvam=ēshām kṛita-sɪm-ānkānām=asya brāhmaṇasya* ..... Text, ll.15-16). Though not stated in all the land grants of the period under study, the same or similar method of demarcating the grant-lands could have been followed throughout North India.

Irrigation is an important aspect of the agrarian system of ancient India. Epigraphs of the period of our study reveal that both the govemment and the general public were interested to see that adequate measures were taken to provide enough water to agricultural lands. There is no direct reference to the system of irrigation in Aśoka's records. But in the Junāgaḍh inscription[48] of Rudradāman we get a clear proof of Aśoka's interest in the matter of irrigation. In this record it is stated that the Sudarśana lake was provided with conduits in the reign of Aśoka.

This lake looms large in the minds of those interested in the socio-economic history of ancient India. Though mentioned in only two inscriptions the information furnished by these epigraphs unfolds a long and eventful history of this large reservoir, beginning with the times of Chandragupta Maurya. The Junāgaḍh inscription[49] of Rudradāman states that the lake Sudarśana was ordered to be constructed by the Vaiśya Pushyagupta, the Provincial governor of the Maurya king Chandragupta *(Mauryasya rājñaḥ Chamdraguptasya rāshtrɪyēṇa Vaiśyēna Pushyaguptēna kāritaṁ*, Text, l.8), and that it was adorned with conduits for Aśoka, the Maurya, by the Yavana king Tushāshpa *(Aśokasya Mauryasya [kṛi*]tē Yavanarājēna Tushāshpēn=ādhishṭhāya pranāḷibhir=alaṁkṛitaṁ*, Text, ll.8-9).

The same epigraph describes in detail how this lake suffered a great damage due to heavy rain in 150 A.D. and how extensive repairs were carried out to it by Rudradāman's minister Suviśākha in public interest. The nature of the damage caused to the lake can be imagined from the statement that through a breach four hundred and twenty cubits long, just as many broad, and seventy five cubits deep, all the water escaped, so that the lake, almost like a sandy desert, looked extremely ugly. It is but natural that the task of repairing a damage of such dimensions required a huge sum of money. We are told that the king's counsellors and executive officers were averse to the task of repair as they regarded it futile on account of the enormous extant of the breach, and that the people in their despair were loudly lamenting. Therefore, the king spent a vast amount of money from his own treasury *(svasmāt= kōśāt)* and within a short period of time got the lake repaired thoroughly. The description of the lake, given at the opening of the epigraph in question, makes it clear that the repairs effected to the lake were extensive and of a permanent nature. This episode is a clear proof of the greatness of Rudradāman and the importance attached to the preservation of sources of irrigation in those days.

Nothing is permanent in this universe except time and space. So, in course of time, the embankment of the Sudarśana lake burst once again in consequence of excessive rain, at a terrible night, in the Gupta year 136 (455-56 A. D.). This time too, the damage was of a large scale, the breach made being 100 cubits in depth, sixty eight in length and 7 *purushas* in height. Again people were dejected and suspcious as to the possibility of restoration of the lake. But their fears were removed by Chakrapālita who got the breach filled and the embankment renewed after two months' work in the Gupta year 137 (456-57 A. D.). This development took place during the reign of Skandagupta and the above details are given in the Junāgaḍh inscription[50] of this king.

We have furnished in Chapter IV a number of epigraphical instances of the construction of tanks, wells, etc., throughout the period runder discussion. If not all, most of these water sources might have been utilised for the irrigational purpose, depending on their size and location. One of the Dāmōdarpur plates[51] refers to water drawing wheels *(araghaṭṭas)* situated in an arid tract of land. In the Talēśvara plate[52] of Vishṇuvarman, assignable to the 6th century A.D. on palaeographical grounds, there is a reference to an irrigation channel *(kulya)*. In line 20 of this record there is the phrase *parvvatāra-kshētra-khāri-vāpaṁ sakulyaṁ*. In the Hātūn rock inscription[53] of Paṭōladēva paleograpllically assignable to the 7th century A.D., there is a reference to some kind of irrigational work. In Chakravarti's translation of this record it is stated that a dam was built across a stream. He takes the expressions *kulya* and *apakrishya* occurring in line six of this record to mean 'a stream' and 'to dam a stream' respectively. But Sircar[54] rightly interprets these expressions as 'a canal' and 'to draw out' and explains that a canal was excavated from a tank and taken out to the forest.

The largest number of irrigation wells are met with in the land grants of the Maitraka kings. Thus, for instance, the Palitānā plates[55] of Dhruvasēna I, a charter[56] of Dharasēna II

and the Jesar plates[57] of Śīlāditya III refer to irrigation wells (*vāpī*). Most of these grants refer to such wells and in some cases their number is more than one. Thus, for example, the Bhāvanagar plates[58] of Dharasēna III refer to three wells and the Jesar plates[59] of Śīlāditya III mention as many as six wells. Normally the extents of these wells are specified in terms of *pādāvartas*. Thus, in the charter of Dharasēna III, just referred to a well is mentioned as *ashṭādaśa-pādāvarttaparisarā vāpī* Text, l.31). In such instances the term *parisara* may stand for either the area of land covered by a well or its circumference. It is further interesting to note that ocassionally these wells are given proper names. In the same charter of Dharasēna III referred to above we have the expression *Khajjūri[-vāpī]* (Text, l.32) *Seridraha-vāpī* (Text. l.35). In these instances, Khajjūri and Seridraha are the proper names of the two wells. It is to be noted that three out of the six wells, mentioned in the Jesar plates of Śīlāditya III referred to above, belonged to the government (*rājakīya-vāpī-traya*, Text, l.51) and the charter of Śīlāditya III, mentioned above, refers to a state-owned well as *rājakīyā,uttara-vāpy-abhidhānā*, which shows that the state povided wells for irrigation purpose at different points of villages. Besides wells, there were also tanks. The charter of Dharasēna II mentioned earlier refers to a tank (*taḍāka*), and a tank called *Malla-taḍāga* is mentioned in the Lunsadi plates[60] of Śīlāditya II. Lastly, an irrigation canal (*vahā*) is mentioned in the Bhāvanagar plates of Dharasēna III mentioned above.

Thus, it becomes evident that throughout the period under discussion both the state and private individuals evinced interest in bringing about a system of irrigation that would help to make the best use of land and make agriculture a profitable occupation.

Agriculture being the main occupation of people, naturally land revenue formed the major source of the State income throughout the period under study. Epigraphs mention a number of fiscal terms like *bhāga, bhōga*, etc., without furnishing such details as the mode of assessment of the land revenue and the nature of the various taxes mentioned.

Both *Arthaśāstra* and the Greek sources testify to a high rate of land tax under the Mauryan rule[61]. In the Rummindēi pillar inscription[62] Aśoka is stated to have reduced the rate of a land tax called *bhāga*, in case of the village Lumbini, the birth place of the Buddha, to 1/8 from the existing 1/4 or 1/6 and exempted the village from another tax called *bali*. This was a great concession given by a Buddhist emperor to a village which was a sacred place of Buddhism. From this we can well imagine the austerity with which land revenue was assessed under the Mauryas. *Bhāga* and *bali* are the two land taxes mentioned in the inscription just refered to.

Of the post-Mauryan period, the Judāgadh inscription[63] of Rudradāman refers to *bali, śulka, bhāga, kara, vishṭi and praṇaya*, all of which are fiscal terms. Though no details of these taxes are given in this inscription, the expressions *yathāvat= prāptair= bali-śulka-bhāgaih* (Text, l.14) and *apiḍayitvā kara-vishṭi-praṇayakriyābhiḥ* (Text, ll.15-16) occurring in

it make it clear that under the Kshatrapa rule *bali, śulka* and *bhāga* were considered the rightful sources of royal revenue and the collection of *kara, vishṭi* and *praṇaya* amounted to oppression.

The land grants of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods mention a number of land taxes. Of the imperial Guptas, the Nālandā copper- plate inscription[64] of Samudragupta mentions only two land taxes, viz., the *uparikara* and *hiraṇya*, The Gayā copper-plate inscription[65] of the same king refers to *uparikara, mēya* and *hiraṇya*.

Of the feudatories and contemporaries of the Imperial Guptas, under the Uchchakalpa rulers *bhāga* and *bhōga*[66] were the main taxes on land. Besides this, *hiraṇya*,[67] *āvāta*[68] and *śulka*,[69] too were levied. The Sohāwal plate[70] of *Mahārāja* Śarvanātha gives perhaps the longest list of taxes found mentioned in the grants of this ruling family. It consists of *udraṅga, uparikara, halikā-kara, bhāga-bhōga-kara, hiraṇya, rājabhāvya-kara* and *chōraḍaṇḍa*.

The land grants of the Parivrājaka kings uniformly mention only two land taxes, viz. *udraṅga* and *uparikara*.[71] So is the case with the grants of the Śarabhapuriya kings whose rule terminated about the close of the 6th or the beginning of the 7th century A.D. according to Shastri.[72] These records refer to *bhōga* and *bhāga*.[73] However, there is an exceptional case[74] in which *dhānya* and *hiraṇya* are added to the usual taxes, *bhōga* and *bhāga*. But the land taxes mentioned in the charters of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśi kings do not fall into a pattern. Here too, *bhōga* and *bhāga*[75] are principal items of land revenue, to which are added *daśāparādha* [76] in one case, and *udraṅga, uparikara* and *chōraḍaṇḍa* [77] in the second case.

Of the post-Gupta period, the land grants of the Maitrakas mention the land taxes, *udraṅga, uparikara, dhānya, bhōga, bhāga, hiraṇya, vishṭi, bhūtavātapratyāya* and *daśāparādha*.[78] The two land grants of Harsha[79] specify *udraṅga, tulyamēya, bhōgakara* and *hiraṇya*.

Thus, we find that the number of land taxes varied from time to time and from one ruling family to another. *Bhāga* was the chief among the land taxes right from the times of Aśoka. We have already seen how it was reduced to 1/8 in case of the village Lumbini. Even if we take into account this epigraph alone it becomes evident that the rate of *bhāga* under the rule of Aśoka was certainly more than 1/8 of the total produce. The fact that another cess called *bali* was abolished in case of the village Lumbini shows that it was a minor tax when compared to *bhāga*. Bhandarkar[80] takes *bali* in the sense of a religious cess levied on pilgrims at sacred places. No other record of Aśoka except the Rummindēi pillar inscription refers to this or any other tax. Hence, it is difficult to make out what could be the nature of this tax under Aśoka.

But *bali* was certainly a land tax under the Kshatrapa rule as evidenced by the Junāgadh inscription of Rudradāman wherein it is grouped with *bhāga* and *śulka*, the three together being viewed as rightful sources of the State revenue. *Bali*[81] was a voluntary gift made by the subjects to the king in the Vedic age and later it came to connote tax in general. It probably means voluntary gifts in the Junāgadh inscription. The term *śulka*[82] normally connotes octroi duties and might have been used in the same sense in

the Junāgaḍh inscription. Of the three taxes considered oppressive by Rudradāman, *kara* is a generic term meaning a tax or rent, *vishṭi*,[83] unpaid labour, and *praṇaya*,[84] the emergency tax or benevolence.

Of the land taxes occurring in the charters of the Imperial Guptas, *uparikara*[85] has been explained as 'additional taxes' or 'a tax paid by the temporary tenants'; *hiraṇya*[86] as the tax payable in cash most probably in addition to the tax payable in grain; and *mēya*[87] has been identified with *bhāga*.

Since most of the land taxes are common to the land grants of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods we treat them together here. The land taxes occurring in these grants are *bhāga, bhōga, halikākara, rājabhāvyakara, udraṅga, uparikara, hiraṇya, śulka, dhānya, āvāta, bhutāvātapratyāya, tulyamēya, vishṭi, daśāparādha* and *chōradaṇḍa*. Some of these terms have already been explained. Of the remaining ones, the term *bhōga*[88] literally means enjoyment and has been explained as 'periodical supply of fiuits, firewood, flowers, etc.,' or sometimes as 'tax in kind.' *Hali* means a large plough; the word *halikā* has obviously been used in the same sense though there is no such word found in dictionaries. The word *halikākara*[89] may be taken to have denoted 'plough-tax', probably assessed on the number of ploughs employed in a particular field. The expression *rājabhāvyakara* has been rendered as 'the trībute of the customary royalties' by Halder.[90] On the strength of the word *bhāvya* which is a component of the compound expression *rājabhāvyakara* and which means 'about to be or happen', this expression may be explained as ' a land tax due to a royal personage who is the future king. i.e.. the crown prince. *Udraṅga*[91] was a tax on the permanent tenants in contrast to *uparikara* which, among other things, stood for tax on temporary tenants. *Dhānya*[92] was obviously a tax payable in grains, *āvāta* forms part of the expression *bhūtāvātapratyāya*[93] explained as 'the income resulting from storms, earth-quakes, changes in the course of a river, etc.' The expression *tulyamēya*[94] denotes 'what is to be weighed and measured', and seems to be a comprehensive tax. We cannot explain how *daśāparādha* which literally means a fine for ten offences could find a place in the list of land taxes. Lastly, in our chapter on the judicial administration we have shown that *chōradaṇḍa* was a tax collected for keeping off the country side from the robbers, thus ensuring protection of standing crops as well as stored agricultural products.

We have given the meanings of the land taxes as interpreted by different scholars. However we may point out that these meanings cannot be said to be the same in all contexts and hence it is necessary to take into account such factors as the position of a particular term in a given record and the presence or absence of certain other terms, in interpreting these terms denoting land taxes.

Trade and Industries

Next to agriculture trade was the important aspect of ancient Indian economic life. Aśokan inscriptions have no information regarding the trade and commerce of the period. However a sealing[95] from Haragaon and a terracotta seal-die[96] from Bhiṭā refer

to guilds *(nigama)* in Mauryan characters. In the epigraphs of the post-Mauryan period the terms *śrēshṭhi*,[97] *sārthavāha*[98] and *vaṇija*,[99] all denoting a trader occur and the terms *śrēshṭhi*[100] *sārthavāha*,[101] *vāṇijaka*[102] and *sādhu*[103] occur in the inscriptions and seals[104] of the Gupta period. Of the post-Gupta period, the epigraphs of the Maitrakas, the Maukharis and Harsha contain no such terms.

The term *śrēshṭhin* means a banker or merchant or the foreman of a guild[105] and *sārthavāha*, a trader or a group of traders moving from place to place. Explaining the term *sārthavāha*, Bhandarkar[106] quotes the following from Rhys Davids' *Buddhist India*: "there were merchants who conveyed their goods either up and down the great rivers, or along the coasts in boats; or right across country in carts travelling in caravans. These caravans, long lines of two-wheeled carts, each drawn by two bullocks, were a distinctive feature of the times. ..." Of course, this description pertains to the 6th century B.C. But, as remarked by Bhandarkar[107] himself, this mode of trading continued in India till recent times. The terms *vaṇika* and *sādhu* also mean a trader. Bhandarkar[108] explains the term *sādhu* as follows: "The Sanskrit term *sādhu* is no doubt preserved in the vernacular *sāhukār* which is found not only in Hindi but also in Marāṭhi and Gujarāti and is applied to a merchant or trader generally." We have earlier stated that the epigraphs of the post-Gupta period do not generally refer to terms denoting merchants. But the charter of Vishṇushēṇa,[109] dated in 592 and 602 A.D., referred to in the earlier chapters, furnishes certain details of the trade of the period. At present it may be noted that the term *vaṇija*, denoting a merchant, occurs in this record. In fact, this very charter was issued by the king to a community of merchants *(vaṇig-grāma)* on their request.

A very interesting term, *viz., pōṭṭalikāputra*, denoting a merchant, occurs in the Sañjēli copper-plate inscription[110] of Tōramāṇa. Ramesh's interpretation of this term as a retail trader is quite convincing. As pointed out by him the word *pōṭṭala* meaning 'a bundle' or 'packet' is current in all the major Dravidian languages in its variants. He writes: "It, therefore, seems likely that by the phrase *vastavyāḥ pōṭṭalikāputrāḥ* were meant those locally resident traders who sold their merchandise in small quantities. In effect the phrase seems to stand for small-time or retail traders who were residents of Vadrapāli".[111]

The epigraph just referred to has the phrase *chaturddig-abhyāgataka-vaidēśya-vāṇijakāh* (Text, l.4) which clearly refers to foreign traders who converged on Vadrapāli with their merchandise from all the four quarters. Regulation No. 52 of Vishṇushēṇa's charter mentioned above reads : *varsha-paryushitā vaṇijaḥ prāvēśyaṁ śulk-ātiyātrikaṁ na dāpanīyāḥ nairgamikaṁ dēyam* (Text, l.21). It purports to state that no tax should be collected from the merchants returning to their native places having stayed abroad for a year, but the exit tax should be collected from them when they again went out for business. Thus, these two epigraphs attest to the commercial contacts with foreign countries established by Indian traders during the period under study. These are important references, for rarely do we get epigraphical references throwing light on the subject of foreign trade, especially of the ancient period.

We have a few direct references to the various commodities of trade. Naturally the food grains formed an important item of trade. Thus, in the post-Mauryan epigraphs we have references to corn-dealers *(dhaṁṁika)*[112] and flour-makers *(samitakara)*.[113] Two epigraphs of the same period, one from Mathurā[114] and the other from Kuḍā,[115] refer to ironmongers *(lōhavāṇiya)*. The Sañjēli copper-plate, inscription[116] of Tōramāṇa refers to salt *(lavaṇa)*, molasses *(guḍa)*, cotton *(karppāsa)*, cotton thread *(guṇṭha)* and food grains *(dhānya)*, as commodities of trade. Of the post-Gupta period, the charter of Vishṇushēṇa[117] refers to the trade of food grains *(dhānya)*, dried ginger *(ādraka)*, cummin seeds *(kaṇikkā)*, coriander seeds *(kustumbarī)* and black mustard *(rājikā)*. These are a few direct references to certain commodities of trade. But it is obvious that ultimately all commodities that were produced were meant for sale. Thus, while dealing with the various professions, industries and guilds we shall refer to certain other commodities like oil, clothes, implements, jewellery , etc., all of which were produced for the purpose of sale, either directly by the producers themselves or by merchants, of which epigraphs furnish no details.

Throughout the period under discussion stone was in great demand for constructing religious as well as secular buildings and for carving images. Epigraphical references to and actual remains of these buildings and sculptures clearly indicate that mining and quarrying for stone was an important industry in ancient India. The Kosam inscription[118] of Bhadramagha's reign, assignable to the 2nd century A.D., refers to a guild of stone-masons (*prastharika-śrēṇi*). Commenting on the find spot of this epigraph, Krishna Deva writes : "The record testifies to the existence of a guild of stone-masons in the Kosam region during the early centuries of the Christian era. It is interesting to note in this connection that within two hundred yards of the find spot of the inscription there is a sand stone quarry, popularly known as Pathar Khan, with remains of ancient workings visible on the spot. It is not improbable that this quarry supplied the stone-masons with requisite material for practising their craft".[119] In the Bhāvnagar plates[120] of Dharasēna III, dated in Saṁvat 304, there is the expression *pāshāṇa-sthalikā-mastaka* which has been aptly rendered as 'the rising ground of a stone quarry' by Diskalkar.[121] An epigraph[122] from Sāmōli in the former Bhomat district of Rajasthan, belonging to the time of the Guhila king Śīlāditya and dated in 646 A.D., records that a *Mahājana* community headed by Jentaka, who had migrated from Vaṭanagara, started an *āgara* in Āraṇyakūpagiri which became a source of livelihood for the people. Halder[123] tentatively equates the term *āgara* to the Sanskrit word *ākara* meaning a mine. But circumstantial evidences show that this is the convincing and the only possible explanation of the term. Firstly, the language of this record is incorrect Sanskrit, secondly, the *āgara* was started in a hill and lastly, the *āgara* is stated to have become a source of livelihood for the people. Therefore, undoubtedly this epigraph refers to the mining and quarrying operations undertaken by a merchant guild. The mineral wealth of Rajasthan is too well known. We are not, however, informed as to which mineral was quarried in this mine.

Thus, the mining and quarrying of stones and minerals was a large scale industry during the period of our study. Perhaps, another such large scale industry was that of distilling liquor. Though Kauṭilya furnishes details about the production and sale of wine we have hardly anything on this subject in the Aśokan and post-Mauryan epigraphs, but for the stray reference to the community of distillers which we have discussed earlier (Chapter I, p. 10). It is from the passage *kshīb-āṁganā-jana*, etc., occurring in the Mandasōr inscription, which we have quoted in the chapter on social conditions (p. 100), that we come to know of the prevalence of the practice of consumption of wine in the Gupta period. But, as regards the production of wine, the charter of Vishṇushēṇa[124] dated in 605 A.D., is, probably, the only epigraphical record of our period throwing light on this subject.

The fact that as many as ten out of seventy-two regulations in the charter of Vishṇushēṇa refer to liquor *(madya)* clearly indicates that wine was produced and sold on a large scale. Regulations Nos. 42-44 stipulate fines on those who posses illegally distilled wine, and No. 45, on those who were caught while distilling liquor *(surā-karaṇasy=āvalōkyē)*. Regulation No. 47 refers to a royal store-house *(rājakīya-gaīīja)* of liquor and Nos. 66, 67 and 69 prescribe tax at different rates for different quantities of liquor that were transported from one place to the other. Lastly, Regulation No. 70 refers to very strong liquor *(kaṭu-madya)* and a specific brand of it called *śīdhu*. These references tend to show that under the reign of Vishṇushēṇa wine production was a major industry strictly controlled, if not monopolised, by the State, and that State earned a good sum of revenue from the fines, licence fees and taxes, all pertaining to the production and sale of wine.

Among the cottage industries production of edible oil was an important one. In the chapter on social conditions we have noted that oil was an important item of food and that it was also used for illuminating the temples. A Nāsik inscription[125] of the post-Mauryan period refers to a guild of oil-millers *(tila-pishaka)* and another such guild *(tailika-śrēṇī)* is mentioned in the Indōr copper-plate inscription[126] of Skandagupta. Regulation No. 51 of the charter of Vishṇushēṇa referred to above, specifies the rate of tax for an oil-mill *(yantra-kuṭī)*.

Weaving of clothes was another cottage industry. The Nāsik inscription[127] of the time of *Kshatrapa* Nahapāna refers to two guilds of weavers *(śrēṇī, kōlikanikāya)* stationed at Gōvardhana and Regulation No. 71 of the charter of Vishṇushēṇa[128] mentions weavers *(kōlika)*. In the chapter on social conditions we have explained how the silk-weavers *(paṭṭavāya)* at Daśapura produced a large quantity of silk cloth of different colours and designs, and acquired stores of wealth. These details are furnished in the Mandasōr inscription[129] of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman. Another epigraph referring to a rich silk-weaver *(paṭṭavāyaka)*, who had made a gift of land, is the Talēśvara copper-plate inscription[130] of Vishṇuvarman assigned to the 6th century A.D.

There is a reference to the guild of the workers fabricating hydraulic engines (*ōda-yaṁtrika)* in a Nāsik cave inscription.[131] The Prakrit term *ōda-yaṁtra* is synonymous with the Sanskrit *jala-yantra* denoting a device fabricated to draw water from a well, obviously, for irrigation purpose. A similar device is referred to by the term *araghaṭṭa* occurring in one of the Dāmōdarpur copper-plates[132] belonging to the Gupta period. The production of water drawing devices seems to have been a prosperous industry at least in the post-Mauryan and Gupta periods, for well irrigation was quite popular in ancient India.

Lastly, there is a reference to an official called *Aurṇasthānika* in the Mallasārul plate[133] of Vijayasēna, assigned to the 6th century A.D. Sircar[134] explains *ūrṇasthāna* as 'a wool factory' and *Aurṇasthānika*, as 'a superintendent of such a factory'. This shows that production of woollen clothes too, was a cottage industry in the Gupta age.

Weights, Measures and Coins

We come across a number of terms denoting weights and measures throughout the period under discussion. The only measurement occurring in the Aśokan epigraphs is that of distance. Thus, P.E. VII[135] records the digging of wells at the intervals of eight *kōs (aḍha-kosikyāni pi me udupānāni khānāpāpitāni,* Text, ll.23-24). Regarding the distance meant by the term *kosa* Hultzsch[136] writes : "Fleet (*JRAS*, 1906, 401 ff.) showed that *aḍha* here represents Skt. *ashṭan*, and not *ardha*. According to Hiuen- Tsang, Bāṇa, and Kautilya (*JRAS*, 1912, 239), one *yōjana* = eight *kōs* = nine miles was considered a day's march of an army, while it would have been unnecessarily lavish and unpractical to sink wells and build rest-houses at distances of but little more than half a mile". Accordingly, one *kōs* was equal to a little more than a mile (exactly $1^{1}/_{8}$ miles).

An epigraph[137] of the post-Mauryan period from Sāñchu refers to a measuring rod *(pamānalaṭhi=* Skt. *pramānayashṭi).* But no such details as the length of this rod or the purpose for which it was used are mentioned in this record.

The Junāgaḍh inscription[138] of Rudradāman gives the measurements of the breach created in the embankments of the Sudarśana lake in terms of a linear measure called *hasta*. An inscription[139] of Skandagupta from the same place employs the terms *hasta* and *purusha* in the same context. Of these two terms, the former has been explained as 'the fore-arm, cubit; a measure of length from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger (=twenty four *Angulas* or about eighteen inches)', and the latter as 'the height or measure of a man' = 5 *Artnis* (1 *Artni* = 2 *padas;* 1 *pada* = 12 *Angulis)* by Monier Williams.[140] The term *hasta* as a measure of length also occurs in the land grants of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods.

Of the post-Mauryan period, we have only the solitary instance of a Kushāṇa inscription[141] from Mathurā, of the reign of Huvishka, mentioning three terms, *viz., āḍhaka. prastha* and *mallaka*, all of which denote measures of different capacities.[142] The

term *ghaṭaka*, also occurring in this record, which is the same as *ghaṭa*, means 'a measure equal to 20 *drōṇas.*'[143] A number of terms denoting grain measures occur in the epigraphs of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods. From the land measures *kulyavāpa, drōṇavāpa* and *āḍhavāpa* mentioned in the Dāmōdarpur plates and kindred records like the Pāhārpur plate, the Baigrām plate and others, we come to know of the grain measures *kulya, drōṇa* and *āḍhaka*. The Talēśvara plate[144] of Vishṇuvarman refers to *khārīvāpa* as a land measure, which shows that *khāri* was yet another grain measure. The following table based on Monier Williams' dictionary shows the relation between these various measures :

1 *khāri* = 2 *kulyas*

1 *kulya* = 8 *drōṇas*

1 *drōṇa* = 4 *āḍhakas*

1 *āḍhaka* = 4 *prasthas*

A *ghaṭa* or *ghaṭaka* has been explained by the same scholar as 'a measure equal to 1 *drōṇa*, or (according to other authorities) equal to 20 *drōṇas*'.[145]

A smaller measure called *pala* occurs in the Indōr copper-plate inscription[146] of Skandagupta and in the Muṇḍēśvarī inscription[147] of Udayasēna, dated probably in the Harsha year 30. In these instances this measure is associated with oil. Apte[148] interprets this term to mean both a weight and 'a particular measure of fluids'. It may be noted that this term stands for a weight in the charter of Vishṇushēṇa.[149]

Two interesting grain measures, *viz., sētaka* with its derivatives, and *kauṭubika* occur in the Sañjēlī plate[150] of Tōramāṇa. Ramesh explains how the term *sētaka* denotes a liquid measure, a weight and also a grain measure in different contexts. Regarding the term *kauṭubika* he writes: "This form is either wrong for or was an accepted variant of *kauḍavika* which is a derivative of *kuḍava*, an ancient grain and linear measure."[151]

We have earlier referred to the land measures called *khārīvāpa, kulyavāpu*, etc. These terms denote a specific area of land in terms of its capacity to receive a particular measure of sowing seeds. Thus, one *kulyavāpa* of land stands for an extent of land required for sowing a *kulya* measure of seeds. But in practice the area of land was measured with a measuring rod called *nala* or *nāla* or *naḍa*. The expression *ashṭaka-navaka-nalābhyām* occurs in one of the Dāmōdarpur plates[152] and in the Baigrām plate.[153] This expression also occurs in the Faridpur plates[154] of Dharmāditya of the 6th century A.D., but here the term *nala* has been used in the singular. From this it seems that an area of 9 x 8 (that is to say, one side measuring a *nala* nine cubits in length and the other a *nala* eight cubits in breadth) formed the basic unit of land measure in the region of Bengal in the Gupta period, as explained by Bhandarkar.[155] But it cannot be ascertained if this unit of 9 x 8 corresponded to any of the *vāpa* measures occurring in inscriptions. The length of a *nala* measure varied in different localities. But it was always measured in terms of *hasta*. Thus, in the Baigrām plate mentioned above the expression *ashṭaka-*

navaka-nalābyhām is immediately preceded by *darvvikarmma-hastēna*. Similarly, in the two Faridpur plates referred to above the expression *aṣṭaka-navaka-nalēna* is immediately preceded by *Śivachandra-hasta*. That the length of the measure *hasta* itself was not an established one, is suggested by the expressions *darvvikarma-hasta* and *Śivachandra-hasta* mentioned above. The term *darvikarman* occurring here has been taken by Sircar[156] to mean 'measurer of land', and Śivachandra is obviously a personal name. Thus, it becomes evident that in one case the length of a *hasta* was fixed according to the length of the fore-arm of a land measurer and in the other, according to that of a person named Śivachandra. As against the oblong land measure of 9 x 8 *nala*, the Pāhārur plate[157] speaks of only *shaṭka-naḍaiḥ* in line 19. *Shaṭka-naḍa* was thus a reed six cubits in length and denoted a linear measure. It is probable that another unit of 6 x 6 is suggested by the expression *shaṭka-naḍa*.

Piṭaka-vāpa is another expression of land measure belonging to the class of *kulyavāpa*. It occurs in the Sañjēli plate[158] of *Mahārāja* Bhūta of the 6th century A.D. and the Sankheda grant[159] of Śāntilla assignable to the late 6th or early 7th century A.D. The word *piṭaka* ordinarily means a basket, but in these instances it denotes a measure of capacity.

Of the other terms denoting land measures, *pādāvarta* occurs in the Maitraka grants. Monier Williams took *pādāvarta* as one square foot, but the areas mentioned in inscriptions suggest a bigger unit. Fleet,[160] therefore, thought that '100 *pādāvartas*' means 'a plot of ground measuring a hundred feet each way', i.e., 10,000 square feet rather than 100 square feet. Another term of land measure met with in the Maitraka grants is *bhakti*. We have come across this term in only two of the grants.[161] This term seems to have been formed from the Sanskrit word *bhakti* meaning 'portion or share', but we have no means to ascertain its size.

Another such term is *pāṭaka* occurring in the Guṇaighar plate,[162] the Kailān plate[163] of Śridhārṇarāta (665-75 A.D.) and the Ashrāfpur plate[164] of Dēvakhaḍga (670-85 A.D.). The expression *ētē daśadrōṇādhika-nava-pāṭakāḥ* in line 12 of the last mentioned record makes it clear that a *pāṭaka* was a bigger land measure than a *drōṇāvāpa*. With reference to the Guṇaighar inscription Sircar[165] has established by calculation that a *pāṭaka* was equal to forty *drōṇāvāpas*.

Lastly, the term *hala* occurs in the Sēnakapāṭ inscription[166] of the time of Śivagupta Bālārjuna, assigned to the 7th century A. D. Literally this word means a plough. Sircar[167] suggests that *hala* as a land measure may have originally indicated an area of land that could be cultivated by a pair of bullocks during a year. However, this term is of rare occurrence in the north Indian epigraphs of the period of our study.

Inscriptions of the period under study mention some coins like *kārshāpaṇa*, *purāṇa*, etc. The Aśokan inscriptions have no occasion to refer to any coin. Of the post-Mauryan period, the Nāsik inscriptions[168] of the time of *Kshatrapa* Nahapāna refer to the coins *kārshāpaṇa* and *suvarṇa*. The Shahadaur Kharōshṭhī inscription[169] refers to a sum of ten

thousand *kārshāpaṇas*, and the Mathurā Brāhmī inscription[170] of the year 28 mentions a coin called *purāṇa*. Sircar's observation on these references to coins is as follows: "Some inscriptions of the Śaka ruler Nahapāna (c. 199-24 A.D.) mention *Kārshāpaṇa*, thirty-five of which are stated to have been equal to the *Suvarṇa*. According to early Indian authorities, *Kārshāpaṇa*, otherwise called *Purāṇa* or *Dharaṇa*, was a silver coin weighing 32 *Ratis* (58.56 grains) while *Suvarṇa* was a gold coin weighing 80 *Ratis* (146.4 grains), although the coins mentioned in the said inscriptions apparently refer respectively to the silver coins issued by Nahapāna and the gold coins issued by the Kushāṇa emperors."[171]

The epigraphs of the Gupta period mention three coins called *dīnāra*, *suvarṇa* and *rūpaka*. *Dīnāra* occurs in the Dāmōdarpur plates and kindred records, the Sāñchi and Gaḍhwā stone inscriptions[172] of Chandragupta II, the two Gaḍhwā stone inscriptions[173] of Kumāragupta and other records. *Suvarṇa* occurs in the Gaḍhwā inscription[174] of Kumāragupta and the Talēśvara plate[175] of Vishṇuvarman assignable to the 6th century A.D., and *rūpaka* occurs only in the Baigrām copper-plate inscription[176] of the (Gupta) year 128 and the charter of Vishṇushēṇa. Of these, both *dīnāra* and *suvarṇa* were gold coins, and Sircar[177] holds that the term *dīnāra* was derived from the Roman coin name *denarius*. *Rūpaka* was a silver coin. While noting on the relation in value between a *dīnāra* and a *rūpaka* as met with in the Baigrām plate mentioned above, Basak[178] makes an interesting calculation. He observes: " As two *drōṇāvāpas* of land are priced at 8 *rūpakas* in lines 6 and 14 of the inscription it appears certain that 8 *rūpakas* are equivalent in value to $^1/_2$ *dīnāra* because 1 *kulyavāpa* (= 8 *drōṇas*) is explicitly priced at the rate of 2 *dīnāras* according to the prevailing custom of sale desccribed in the inscription. Hence 1 full *dīnāra* will be equal to 16 *rūpakas* ". Thus, it becomes evident that in the Gupta period one *dīnāra* was equal to sixteen *rūpakas* in the region of Bengal. Of the same period, the Niṅgoṇḍi grant[179] of Prabhañjanavarman refers to a coin called *paṇa*.

A coin called *viṁśōpaka* is met with in the charter of Vishnushēṇa referred to earlier. As suggested by its name this coin forms the twentieth part of a standard coin and has been explained as 'a copper coin which was one-twentieth of the standard silver coin in value'.[180] Both the silver *rūpaka* and *viṁśōpaka* occur in the charter of Vishṇushēṇa. It is interesting to note that this record refers to a half (*ardha*, Regulation Nos. 43 and 55) and a quarter (*pāda*, Regualtion Nos. 25, 36, 38 etc.) of a *rūpaka*.

Transport

We come to know something about the means of transportation from the epigraphs of the period we are concerned with. The P.E. V[181] of Aśoka prohibits the castration of bulls and branding of bullocks and horses on certain days. This reference to horse and bullock obviously pertains to their use for non-military purposes. The use of horse as a means of transportation and that of bullock for agricultural purposes in ancient India is well known. But it is quite possible that bullocks were used also as beasts of burden

for inland trade during the Mauryan period. Epigraphs of the post-Mauryan period have nothing to state on this subject. The Sañjēlī plate[182] of Tōramāṇa refers to donkey *(gardabha)*, cart *(śakaṭa)* and vessel *(bhaṇḍa)* as means of transportation. In the charter of Vishṇushēṇa[183] buffalo *(mahisha)*, camel *(ushṭra)*, bull *(balīvarda)*, donkey *(gardabha)* and boat *(bhaṇḍa)* and vessels *(vahitra)* are referred to as means of transportation.

Other professions

Besides agriculture and trade, inscriptions refer to a number of other professions that were followed by people for their livelihood. These professions ranged from the most utilitarian crafts like carpentry and smithy to the highly skilled arts like ivory working. As usual we commence with the epigraphs of the post-Mauryan period, for the Aśokan inscriptions have nothing to state on this subject. An inscription[184] of the post-Mauryan period from Kārlē records that the facade of a *chaitya* hall *(gharasa mugha)* was the work of a carpenter *(vaḍhaki)*. The work of a carpenter in a rock-cut cave sounds quite inconsistent. But it is well known that the early Buddhist rock-cut architecture was an imitation of the earlier wooden architecture, and ribs of wood were actually attached to the roof in the *chaitya* at Kārlē which are described by Coomaraswamy[185] as "one of the last instances of this peculiar vestigial use of wood work in combination with the solid stone". A carpenter *(vaḍhaki)* named Manorama figures in a Sāñchi *stūpa* inscription[186] of the 3rd -2nd century B.C. A Jaina image inscription[187] of the Scythian period from Mathurā seems to refer to the caste of carpenters *(vaddha[ki]nina*m, Text, l.3).

Then there were workers in base metals. Two post-Mauryan epigraphs[188] from Mathurā refer to workers in metals *(lōhikākāraka* or *lōhikakāruka)*, and a Kaṇhēri inscription[189] records the gift of a blacksmith *(kamāra)*. A field of a blacksmith *(lōhakāra)* is mentioned in the boundary marks in a land grant[190] of the Guhila chief Bābhaṭa, dated in 688 A.D. Another post-Mauryan epigraph[191] from Junnar refers to a guild of braziers *(kāsākāra)*. Besides, the large number of copper-plate charters issued in the Gupta and post-Gupta periods must have engaged a number of coppersmiths and engravers. Incidentally, this is also true of hundreds of stone inscriptions, belonging to the period of our study, which must have offered employment to stone dressers and engravers.

There seems to be a solitary reference to a guild of potters *(kularika)* in a Nāsik inscription[192] of the post-Mauryan period. But it is doubtful if the word *kularika* denotes a potter.

A post-Mauryan epigraph[193] from Junnar mentions a guild of bamboo-workers *(vasakara)* and the charter of Vishṇushēṇa[194] refers to the transportation of bamboo in boats *(vaṁśa-bhṛita-vahitrasya ……*, Regulation No. 61), thereby attesting to the prevalence of working in bamboo.

A saddler *(pallānakāra)* is mentioned in the Allahābād Museum inscriptions[195] of Bhadramagha, belonging to the 2nd century A.D., and the word *padakāra* occurring in the charter of Vishṇushēṇa probably denotes a shoe-maker as suggested by Sircar.

An inscription[196] of the Kushāṇa period from Mathurā records the gift of a *rayagiṇī*. Lüders[197] takes the word *rayagiṇī* as equal to the Sanskrit word *rajakī*, and renders it as 'wife of a dyer'. But it is well known that the Sanskrit word *rajaka* denotes a washerman and not a dyer. However, a dyer of clothes *(chhimpaka)* figures in the charter of Vishṇushēṇa. Sircar takes the word *chhimpaka* occurring here to be the same as Prakrit *chhimpaya*. Earlier, in the chapter on social conditions we have explained how cloak-making was a prosperous profession in the Kushāṇa age so that the cloak-makers *(prāvārikas)* could afford to construct a *vihāra* which was named *Prāvārika-vihāra*, as can be known from the Buddha image inscription[198] of the year 22 from Mathurā.

The large number of temples and images that were caused to be constructed and carved during the period under study must have employed hundreds of stone-masons and sculptors. But we have come across only two epigraphical references to these workers in stone. Both of these epigraphs belong to the post-Mauryan period. Thus, a Bhārhut *stūpa* inscription[199] records a gift of a sculptor *(rupakāraka)*. Another reference to the work of carving is found in a Sāñchi *stūpa* inscription.[200] It is quite interesting to note that this epigraph states that the carving work on one of the *stūpas* at Sāñchi was done by the workers in ivory from Vidiśā *(Vedisakehi damtakārehi rupakammaṁ kataṁ)*. We wonder how these ivory workers could do the carving in an altogether different medium like stone. Incidentally, working in ivory was another profession known from this solitary inscription.

Goldsmiths *(suvarṇakāra)* can always have a prosperous business in a country like ours where gold was produced in plenty right from the earliest times and where both haves and have-nots have a special liking for gold ornaments. So did they in the post-Mauryan period and a monastery called *Suvarṇakāravihāra* figuring in a Mathurā inscription[201] was obviously built by them. A few more epigraphs[202] of this period refer to goldsmiths. Of the Gupta period, the Sañjēlī plate[203] of *Mahārāja* Bhūta refers to the foaming waters of the tank caused to be excavated by a goldsmith *(suvarṇṇakāra-kāritaka-taḍāga-phēn-ākrānta-maryyādayā*, Text, l.6) among the boundaries of a grant-land. This is another instance of the prosperity of goldsmiths in ancient India.

Like the goldsmiths the jewellers and lapidaries too, had a prosperous career. A Mathurā Inscription[204] of the post-Mauryan period records a gift of a Jaina image by the daughter of a jeweller *(mānikara)*, another inscription[205] of the same period from Kaṇhēri records the gift of a cave by another jeweller *(manikara)*. The Mathurā image inscription[206] of Kumāragupta I, dated in 426-27 A.D. records the putting up of the image of a Jina by the wife of a lapidary *(prārthārika)*. Bhandarkar[207] thus explains the word : "If *prā[ttthā]rika* is the correct reading it stands for the Sanskrit *prāstārika*, 'a dealer in *prastara*'.

But *prastara* signifies both an ordinary and precious stone. Perhaps the second sense is here intended. In that case *prāstārika* denotes a lapidary."

Lastly, there was the perfumer *(gamdhika)* catering to the luxuries of the rich. Lüders' List refers to as many as eight inscriptions[208] of the post-Mauryan period recording valuable gifts by perfumers. Of these, four inscriptions come from Mathurā, one from Kārlē, one from Pitalkhōra and two from Amarāvatı in the Deccan. In this connection we may note that a royal official called *saugandhaka (saugandhika)* who was probably the officer in-charge of perfumery, is mentioned in the Brāhmı inscription[209] on a wooden pillar from Kirāri, belonging to the 2nd century A.D. Thus, it becomes evident that the perfumers too, had a lucrative business in the post-Mauryan period.

Guilds

Earlier we have discussed about the antiquity of guilds in Indian history and their military and judicial activities. Here we propose to discuss certain other aspects of the guilds. So far as the period of our study is concerned the existence of the guilds of traders and persons engaged in other professions, right from the Mauryan period, is established by seals and epigraphs. However, it is only from the epigraphs that we come to know about the activities of these guilds. Therefore, we furnish here the activities of the guilds as detailed in the inscriptions and try to arrive at some general conclusions.

1. The Mathurā Brāhmı inscription[210] of the year 28 records that a guild of flour-makers *(samitakara-śrēṇı)* and another (name not clear) were entrusted with the management of 550 *purāṇas* each, and that, out of the monthly interest on the capital, they were to arrange for serving hundred Brāhmaṇas in the *puṇyaśāla* and to provide daily certain food items to the needy people.
2. The Nāsik inscription[211] of the time of *Kshatrapa* Nahapāna records that a total sum of 3,000 *kārshāpaṇas* was entrusted to the two guilds of weavers stationed at Gōvardhana, with the stipulation that they should defray the expenses of providing clothes and *kuśaṇa* to the monks, out of the interest accruing on this capital. It is further stated that this contract was registered at the town hall, at the record office, according to custom.
3. Another inscription[212] at Nāsik dated in the 9th year of the Ābhıra king Iśvarasēna records investment of different amounts with the guilds of *kularikas* (probably potters), *ōdayantrikas* (workers fabricating hydraulic engines) and that of oil-millers. The object of this endowment was to provide medicines for the sick of the *saṃgha* of monks dwelling in the monastery on mount Triraśmi.
4. An inscription[213] at Junnar records the investment of the income of two fields with the guild at Konāchika for planting Karañja trees and banyan trees.
5. Another inscription[214] at Junnar records the investment of money with the guild of bamboo-workers *(vasakara)* and the guild of braziers *(kāsākāra)*.

6. A third inscription[215] at Junnar records the gift of a cave and cistern by the guild of corn dealers *(dhamñika)*.
7. The Kōsam inscription[216] of Bhadramagha's reign, assigned to the 2nd century A.D. records the installation of *āsana-paṭṭas, i.e.* seats by a guild of stone-masons *(prastharika)*.
8. The Indōr copper-plate inscription[217] of Skandagupta records a perpetual endowment by a Brāhmaṇa for the purpose of maintaining a lamp in a temple of the Sun at Indrapura. The amount of the endowment was invested at Indrapura with a guild of oil-men *(tailika)* of which Jıvanta was the head *(pravara)*. The guild was to make a uniform and perpetual supply of oil for lamp, wherever it was stationed, whether at Indrapura or at some other town whither it might emigrate. It is obvious that the said provision for oil was to be made out of the interest on the capital amount invested in the guild.
9. The Mandasōr stone inscription[218] of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman states that a magnificent temple of the Sun was built by the guild of silk-weavers *(paṭṭavāyaka)* in the year 436 A.D. and that the same was repaired in the year 472 A.D. when it fell into disrepair, by the same guild.

These instances throwing some light on the activities of the guilds pertain to the post-Mauryan and Gupta periods. We do not come across references to guilds in the post-Gupta records falling within the period of our study. Thus, the epigraphs of the Maitrakas, the Maukharis and Harsha have no reference to guilds. Of course, the term *śrēṇibala* occurs in the Maitraka grants and we have discussed the same in the chapter on military administration.

From the inscriptions at numbers 1-5 and 8 it becomes evident that the guilds accepted deposits from the public and paid interest at the stipulated rates. It may be argued that since these epigraphs refer to only some religious contexts, the guilds accepted deposits for such purposes only. It cannot be so, for inscriptions at numbers 1 and 2 above specifically state that some arrangements of charity were to be made by the guilds out of the interest accrueable on the deposits that were invested with them and not at their own cost. In case a guild desired to make some pious dedication at its own cost it could have been done directly without accepting any deposits as was done in inscriptions at numbers 6, 7 and 9. It is obvious that the guilds were interested in raising large sums of money from people and utilising it for developing their business. Similarly, they could have advanced loans to those who needed them and charged interest at the prescribed rates. In fact, Kauṭilya states: ".... Those who can give instructions to artisans, who can be trusted with deposits, who can plan artistic work after own design, and who can be relied upon by guilds of artisans, may receive deposits of the guilds. The guilds *(śrēṇı)* shall receive their deposits back in time of distress."[219] Thus, it may be held that the guilds served as Local Banks in ancient India. The very fact that the

general public made perpetual endowments with the guilds suggests that the latter were honest and fair in their dealings and financially sound. That the agreement mentioned in the inscription at number 2 above was registered at the record office of the local government proves that the guilds were recognised as an important factor in the municipal government of ancient cities.

Considering the manifold objects with which endowments were made with the guilds we cannot help appreciating their zeal for philanthropic activities. In one case a guild was required to plant particular trees, while in the other, several others were to provide medicines for the sick monks. Thus, the guilds functioned as trustees of public funds without affecting their own interests. Besides, they undertook such pious acts like excavating caves and cisterns for monks, and building and repairing temples at their own cost as evidenced from the epigraphs at numbers 6, 7 and 9 mentioned above.

It is rather disappointing that inscriptions throw no light on such subjects as the constitution of guilds and the mode of their business. However, the charter of Vishnushēna[220] has got something to state on this subject. Regulation No.12 of this charter states that members of different guilds should not be allowed to flock to the same market (*sarva-śrēninām=ēk-āpaṇakō na dēyaḥ*). The idea seems to be that different mercantile guilds should occupy different markets or at least different quarters of the same market.[221] The next regulation states that all the guilds should not be compelled to pay *khōvā*, the meaning of which is unknown. It may be the same thing as the *aṭṭapatibhōga* or 'the share of the lord of market' mentioned as a tax in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (V. 164).[222] According to this rule certain guilds seem to have been exempted from paying this particular tax.

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41. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 52 ff.
42. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 78 ff.
43. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 38.

44. e.g., *Ibid.*, No. 47.
45. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 363 ff., 367 ff. and 370 ff.
46. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 155 ff.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
48. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 36 ff.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 28.
51. *Ibid.*, No. 24.
52. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 109 ff.
53. *Ibid.*, Vol., XXX, pp. 226 ff.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 231, n. 4.
55. *Ibid.*, Vol. XI, pp. 105 ff.
56. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 170 ff.
57. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXII, pp. 114 ff.
58. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 181 ff.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 208 ff.
60. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 74 ff.
61. U.N. Ghoshal, *ASAI.*, p. 31.
62. *C.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 164 ff.
63. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 36 ff.
64. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 3.
65. *Ibid.*, No. 4.
66. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No. 26.
67. *Ibid.*, Nos. 28 and 29.
68. *Ibid.*, No. 31.
69. *Ibid.*, No. 27.
70. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 127 ff.
71. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 264 ff; *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No. 22, etc.
72. *PP.*, Vol. V, No. 1, p. 25.
73. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 28 ff., pp. 314 ff., etc.
74. *Ibid.*, pp. 263 ff.

75. *Ibid.*, pp. 211 ff.
76. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXV, pp. 60 ff.
77. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 132 ff.
78. K.J. Virji, *AHS.*, pp. 243 ff.
79. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, pp. 208 ff.; Vol. I, pp. 67 ff.
80. D.R. Bhandarkar, *Aśoka*, p. 76.
81. *IEG.*, p. 45.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 327.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 379.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 256.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 352.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
90. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIX, p. 131.
91. *IEG.*, p. 349.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 345.
95. K.K. Thaplyal, *SAIS.*, pp. 223-24.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
97. *List.*, p. 223.
98. *Ibid.*
99. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
100. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), pp. 285, 344, etc.
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XL, p. 181.
103. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 278.
104. *SAIS.*, pp. 223 ff.
105. *IEG.*, p. 317.

106. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), pp. 101-02
107. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 279, n. 4.
109. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 163 ff.
110. *Ibid.*, Vol. XL, pp. 175 ff.
111. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
112. *List.*, No. 1180.
113. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 55 ff.
114. *List.*, No. 29.
115. *Ibid.*, No. 1055.
116. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XL, pp. 175 ff.
117. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 163 ff.
118. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 253 ff.
119. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 254.
120. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 181 ff.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
122. *Ibid.*, Vol. XX, pp. 97 ff.
123. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
124. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 163 ff.
125. *List.*, No. 1137.
126. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 30.
127. *List.*, No. 1133.
128. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, p. 178.
129. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 35.
130. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 118 ff.
131. *List.*, No. 1137.
132. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 24.
133. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 155 ff.
134. D.C. Sircar, *IE(S).*, p. 360.
135. *C.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 130 ff.
136. *Ibid.*, p. 135, n. 1.

137. *List.*, No. 200.
138. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 36 ff.
139. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 28.
140. *Williams.*, pp 1168 and 585.
141. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 55 ff.
142. *IEG.*, pp. 5, 257 and 193 respectively.
143. *Apte.*, p. 419.
144. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 118 ff.
145. *Williams.*, p. 306.
146. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 30.
147. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IX, pp. 289 ff.
148. *Apte.*, p. 605.
149. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 163 ff.
150. *Ibid.*, Vol. XL, pp. 175 ff.
151. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
152. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), pp. 336-37, Text, l.10.
153. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 78 ff.
154. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 363 ff.
155. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), pp. 338-39.
156. *IEG.*, p. 84.
157. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XX, pp. 59 ff.
158. *Ibid.*, Vol. XL, pp. 181 ff.
159. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 21 ff.
160. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 170, n. 4.
161. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VII, pp. 188 ff.
162. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 340 ff.
163. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 36 ff.
164. *Ibid.*, pp. 41 ff.
165. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 342, n. 4.
166. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 31 ff.
167. *IE(S).*, p. 411.

168. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 164 ff. and 167 ff.
169. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 200 ff.
170. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 55 ff.
171. *IE(S).*, p. 428. Prof. Ajay Mitra Shastri holds that the gold coins referred to in Nahapāna's inscription should be identified with Roman gold coins and not Kushāṇa golden coins (See *Manjusha*, Dr. S.R. Rao 60th Birthday felicitation Volume, Bangalore, 1985, pp. 130 ff.)
172. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, Nos. 5 and 7.
173. *Ibid.*, Nos. 8 and 9.
174. *Ibid.*, No. 64.
175. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIII, pp.118 ff.
176. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 78 ff.
177. *IEG.*, p. 97.
178. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, p. 80.
179. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 112 ff.
180. *IEG.*, p. 374.
181. *C.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 125 ff.
182. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XL, pp. 175 ff.
183. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 163 ff.
184. *List.*, No. 1092.
185. A.K. Coomaraswamy quoted in *AIU.*, p. 501.
186. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. II, p. 389, No. 311.
187. *Ibid.*, Vol. X, pp. 110 ff.
188. *List.*, Nos. 53 and 54.
189. *Ibid.*, No. 1032.
190. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 173 ff.
191. *List.*, No. 1165.
192. *Ibid.*, No. 1137.
193. *Ibid.*, No. 1165.
194. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 163 ff.
195. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 245 ff.
196. *List.*, No. 32.

197. *Ibid.*, p. 221.
198. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 65 ff.
199. *List.*, No. 857.
200. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. II, p. 378, No. C 189.
201. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIX, pp. 65 ff., No. VI.
202. *Ibid.*, Vol. X, p. 118, No. XII; *List.*, Nos. 986 and 92a.
203. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XL, pp. 181 ff.
204. *List.*, No. 29.
205. *Ibid.*, No. 1005.
206. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 18.
207. *Ibid.*, p. 273, n. 5.
208. *List.*, Nos. 37, 39, 68, 76, 1090, 1187, 1210 and 1230.
209. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 152 ff.
210. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 55 ff.
211. *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 82 ff.
212. *Ibid.*, pp. 88 ff.
213. *List.*, No. 1162.
214. *Ibid.*, No. 1165.
215. *Ibid.*, No. 1180.
216. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 253 ff.
217. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 30.
218. *Ibid.*, No. 35.
219. Kauṭilya quoted in *SAIS.*, p. 235.
220. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 163 ff.
221. *Ibid.*, p. 171.
222. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER VI

EDUCATION

The degree of civilization reached by a particular society reflects the system of education adopted by it, for the ultimate goal of education of any kind is to refine the human behaviour and lead the human society towards perfection in its multifarious activities. Therefore, it is no wonder that all societies in all times of human history strove to educate their members. Ancient Indian society is no exception to this general statement and the very fact that even to this day it is the *Vēdas*, the *Upanishads*, the Epics and the *Dharmaśāstras* that form the basic source of inspiration for every orthodox Hindu, is a living example for the ingenious devices adopted by ancient Indians for the transmission of knowledge from generation to generation. Literary sources draw a vivid picture of the ancient Indian educational system in all its details, but the epigraphs of the period we are discussing contain much less information on the subject.

Royal Education

There had been always a difference between the education of common people and that of the princes. For a common man it was enough to gain proficiency in the particular branch of knowledge which was his prime concern. Thus, for example, a Brāhmaṇa student devoted his time for the study of the *Vēdas* and rituals, a Kshatriya strove to attain proficiency in the use of weapons, and so on. But a prince, a potential ruler that he was, had to equip himself with many sciences and arts, besides the use of weapons and polity, since, as a ruler, he would be dealing with different kinds of people and problems and would come to be considered an ideal personality, nay, an incarnation of god himself.

Kauṭilya[1] thus explains the fruits of perfect education accrueable to a ruler: "The king who is well educated and disciplined in sciences, devoted to the good government of his subjects, and bent on doing good to the people, will enjoy the earth unopposed" (*vidyāvinītō rājā hi prajānāṁ vinayē ratah ananyāṁ prithivīṁ bhunktē sarvabhūtahitē ratah,*

Text, p. 11). While describing the life of the king from the time he underwent the ceremony of tonsure (*vritta- chaulakarma*) onwards, Kautilya[2] states that the king, as a student, shall learn the alphabet (*lipi*), and arithmetic (*samkhyānam*), study the triple *Vēda* (*trayi*), the science of *anvikshaki* the science of *vārtā* and of *daṇḍanīti* both in theory and practice (*vaktṛiprayōktṛibhyah*). He[3] further states that the king should ever and invariably keep company with aged professors of sciences, in whom alone discipline has its firm roots, receive military lessons in the forenoon, hear *Itihāsa* (history) in the afternoon and during the rest of the day and night, he shall not only receive new lessons and revise old lessons, but shall hear over and over again what has not been clearly understood. Thus, it becomes evident that a code of royal education was strictly followed in ancient India.

Aśokan inscriptions have nothing to state about education, royal or general, except passing references to teachers and pupils. But his career and achievements as illustrated in his edicts clearly show that as a prince he was thoroughly trained in the various branches of knowledge as prescribed by Kauṭilya.

The earliest epigraph to refer to the subject of royal education is the Hāthigumphā inscription[4] of Khāravela of the 1st century B.C. This record informs us that as a prince Khāravela studied the royal correspondence (*lekha*), currency (*rūpa*), finance (*gaṇanā*) and civil and religious laws (*vavahāra* and *vidhi*). Obviously, this is not an exhaustive list of the subjects studied by Khāravela, for immediately after the enumeration of the subjects just mentioned, he is styled as *sava-vijāvadāta*, i.e. 'one well-versed in all branches of learning'. Therefore, it is quite likely that he studied certain sciences and arts other than those mentioned in this record. One such art could be music, for we come to know that he arranged festive gatherings, featuring dance and music, to entertain his subjects. Specific mention of two kinds of dances (*dapa* and *nata*) and vocal and instrumental music (*gīta* and *vādita*) in this epigraph tends to show that Khāravela had studied music. The non-mention of military science in the above list of subjects is not of serious consequences, because it was the basic and too well known a subject with reference to a prince to find a specific mention here.

The Junāgaḍh inscription[5] of Rudradāman, dated in 150 A.D., is another epigraph furnishing some details of royal education. This record gives a long list of sciences and arts, both literary and military, in which the king had gained proficiency. Thus, the king is stated to have attained wide fame by studying and remembering, by the knowledge and practice of grammar, music, logic and other great sciences, the management of horses, elephants and chariots, the use of sword and shield, pugilistic combat and efficiency of opposing forces. The relevant text passage runs thus : *śabd-ārtha-gāndharvva-nyāy-ādyānāṁ vidyānāṁ pāraṇa -dhāraṇa -vijñāna- prayōg -āvāpta- vipula-kīrttinā turaga-gaja-rathacharyy-āsi-charma-niyuddh-ādyā..... [ti]-para-bala-lāghava-saushṭhava-kriyēṇa*, Text, l.13). Further, the king is described as skilled in producing compositions of high literary merits in prose and verse (*sphuṭa-laghu-madhura-chitra-kānta-śabdasamay-ōdār-ālaṁkrita-*

gadya-padya ..... Text, l.14). This description of Rudradāman is a clear proof of the excellent education imparted to him that inspired and nourished his qualities of head and heart. His career as a military genius and the elegant poetic style of the composition of this record, marking an important stage in the development of classical Sanskrit literature, clearly indicate that this king greatly deserves the compliments paid to him.

So far as our knowledge goes these are the only epigraphs from North India, belonging to the entire period under study, deliberately mentioning the various subjects of royal education. However, it is possible to know something about royal education from the epithets of rulers occurring in inscriptions.

We have elsewhere explained how Samudragupta was well- versed in music. Portrayal of this king as playing a lute, on his coins, clearly indicates that he had undergone a systematic training in music. That he had thoroughly studied the science of poetics is known from his epithet *Kavirāja* which he is stated to have earned through his compositions (*anēka-kāvya-kkriyābhiḥ pratishṭhita- kavirāja-śabdasya*, Text, l.27).[6] His versatility in the *daṇḍanīti* is indicated in the statement that he excelled Bṛihaspati in respect of his sharp and polished intellect (*niśita-vidagdha-mati ..... vriḍita- tridaśapatiguru* ....., Text, l.27).[7]

Epigraphs of the post-Gupta period too contain several indirect references to royal education. In the chapter on the military administration we have quoted passages from inscriptions illustrative of the skill in wielding different weapons like sword, bow, etc., on the part of the Maitraka rulers Guhasēna, Dharasēna II, Dharasēna IV, and the Maukhari rulers Anantavarman, Ādityavarman and Īśānavarman. Refraining from repeating these passages, we would like to state that such descriptions bear testimony to the methodical military education imparted to the rulers in their early age.

Like the Imperial Guptas, the Maitrakas too were great patrons of learning. That the Maitraka princes were taught subjects other than military science and polity is known from their charters. Thus, for instance, in the Māliyā copper-plate inscription[8] of the *Mahārāja* Dharasēna II, dated in 571-72 A.D., Dhruvasēna I is described as 'the teacher of the real meaning of the sacred writings' (*avabōddhā śāstr-ārtha-tatvānām*, Text, l.7). Likewise, in the Alīnā copper-plate inscription[9] of Śīlāditya VII, dated in 766-67 A.D., Dharasēna II is extolled as 'the one (joint) habitation of wealth and learning' (*Śrī-Sarasvatyōr=ēk-ādhi-vāsasya*, Text. l.9); Śīlāditya I is stated to have possessed pure intellect through mastering thoroughly all the sciences (*sarvva- vidyā-pāra-parama-bhāg-ādhigama-vimala-matir=api*, Text. ll.11-12); Kharagraha I is stated to have excelled in knowledge of the sacred writings (*śāstra-kauśal-ātiśayō*, Text. l.18); and Dhruvabhaṭa has been styled as "full of virtue through his knowledge of the three (*Vēdas*)" (*jñāta-trayī-guṇa-mayō*, Text. l.59). Thus, it becomes evident that the Maitraka princes were taught the *Vēdas*, the *Dharmaśāstras* and the other branches of learning besides undergoing military training.

The Maukhari rulers too are stated to have pursued scholarship and the study of the fine arts. The Nāgarjunī Hill Cave inscription[10] of Anantavaman, assigned to the 6th century A.D., extolls Yajñavarman as foremost of all kings in respect of wisdom (*prajñān-ānvaya. ..... yō rājakasy=āgraṇiḥ* Text, l.4). Similarly, in the Harāhā inscription[11] of Iśānavarman, prince Sūryavarman is depicted as a highly learned person and accomplished in fine arts. Part of the relevant verse reads: *śāntaḥ śāstra-vichāraṇ-āhita-manāḥ pāraṇ-kalānān= gataḥ | lakshmī-kīrtti-sarasvatī-prabhṛitayḥ yam spardhay= ēv= āśritāḥ* ....., (Text, V.17).

Thus, the instances quoted above clearly show that the curriculum of royal education consisted of various sciences beginning with military training and included subjects like the *Vēdas*, the *Dharma- śāstras*, poetics, music and other fine arts.

Teachers

M.R.E. II[12] refers to teachers and pupils. In this Edict Aśoka orders that the pupil must show reverence to his teacher (*aṁtevāsinā ācharīya apachāyitaviye*, Text, l.10). This exhortion clearly shows that teachers were held in due respect by their pupils. This reference to the teacher is of a general nature, and hence it is not possible to know if this teacher was a religious or a secular teacher.

From the post-Mauryan period onwards we have several epigraphic references to teachers. Since Buddhism and Jainism had their heyday under the alien rulers, the Kshatrapas and the Kushāṇas, it is natural to expect that the teachers mentioned in the epigraphs of this period are the religious teachers of Buddhism and Jainism. It is only from the Gupta period that we come across epigraphical references to the Vedic teachers.

The Buddhist teachers were known both by the generic terms *āchārya* and *upādhyāya* and specific terms *peṭakin*, *traipiṭaka*, etc., the latter of which individually indicate specialization in a particular branch of religious studies. Of all these, the term *ācharya* is frequently met with. Thus, for example, the Set-Mahet image inscription[13] of the time of Kanishka or Huvishka mentions the *ācharyas* of the Sarvāstivādin school and one of the inscriptions[14] on the Mathurā Lion-capital of the time of the *Mahākshatrapa* Rājūla, refers to *āchārya* Buddhadēva. Similarly the Kura inscription[15] of Tōramāṇa Shāha, assignable to the 4th-5th century A.D., mentions the *ācharyas* of the Mahīśāsaka school of Buddhism. The term *upādhyāya* occurs with lesser frequency than that of *ācharya*. For instance an inscription[16] of the Kushāṇa period from Mathurā refers to *upādhyāya* Dharmaka and *upādhyāya* Rōhinimitra is mentioned in the Taxila copper-plate inscription[17] of Patika, dated in 21 A.D. Many more such references can be found in the inscriptions of the post-Mauryan period. Of the Gupta period a stone image inscription[18] from Bōdh-Gayā mentions both *ācharya* and *upādhyāya*. On the basis of the occurrence of the terms *upādhyāyinī* in a contemporary Buddhist inscription[19] from Amarāvatī we may hold that there were female teachers called *upādhyāyinī*s during this period in North India too though we have not come across epigraphical references to this effect.

Now according to Manu[20] ten *upādhyāyas* are equal to one *ächārya*. Thus, an *upādhyāya* is much inferior to an *ächārya* with regard to scholarship and status. It is difficult to ascertain if these two terms are used in this technical sense in the examples quoted above. From the contexts they seem to have been employed in a general sense of 'teacher'.

A Junnar Buddhist cave inscription[21] mentions a term *gaṇächārya*, rendered as a *gaṇa* teacher. There seems to be no difference between an *ächārya* and a *gaṇächārya* except that the latter is expressly stated to belong to a particular Buddhist *gaṇa*. However there is no mention of a *gaṇa* in the epigraph just mentioned.

We have another set of terms denoting teachers occurring in the Prakrit inscriptions of the post-Mauryan period. These terms are formed from the words *piṭaka*, *vinaya* and *nikāya*, which are the different names given to Buddhistic literature. Thus Lüders takes the words *peṭakin*, *traipiṭikā*, *traividya*, *traipiṭakopādhyāya*, *vinayadhara*, *vināyaka* and *pañchanaikāyika* to stand for Buddhist teachers. This is how he explains these terms in his 'Index of Miscellaneous terms'[22]. This seems to be unwarranted, at least with regard to the contexts in which these terms occur. Lüders himself refrains from rendering most of these terms as teachers in his translation of the epigraphs containing these terms. In the whole list of terms given above, none except *traipiṭakopādhyāya* and *vināyaka* primarily denotes a teacher. For the term *vināyaka*, Apte[23] gives the meanings of 'a Buddhist deified teacher' and 'a spiritual preceptor', and Childers[24] gives the meaning 'a spiritual leader or a teacher.' This word seems to have been formed from the root *nī*, meaning to carry or to lead and not from the Buddhist *Vinaya* literature. Of the remaining term, *traipiṭaka* with its feminine form *traipiṭikā* and *traividya* seem to be synonymous. For, on the analogy of the word *trayi* meaning the three *Vēdas*, the word *tri* as a constituent of the term *traividya* might have denoted the three *piṭakas*. The term *peṭakin* also can be grouped with them as it is derived from *piṭaka*. The two terms *vinayadhara* and *pañchanaikāyika* are derived from the words *vinaya* and *nikāya* respectively. Now, to consider these terms, *peṭakin* means 'one who knows one or more *piṭakas*'. The terms *traipiṭaka*, *traipiṭikā* and *traividya* individually mean 'one who knows the three *piṭakas*', *vinayadhara* means one who knows the *vinaya* texts; and *pañchanaikāyika* means 'one who knows the five *Nikāyas Dīgha*, *Majjhima*', etc. Thus, it becomes evident that primarily these words do not mean a teacher. But this is not to preclude the possibility of teaching on the part of scholars versed in the different texts of Buddhism. In fact, we know that *traipiṭaka* Bala was a teacher as he is associated with his pupils *(antevāsins)* in the Mathurā image inscription[25] of the year 33 of Huvishka and the Bōdhisattva image inscription[26] of the 3rd year of Kanishka. Similarly, *pañchanaikāyika* Dēvagiri of a Sānchi inscription[27] was a teacher as he is associated with his pupil in this record. But this is not the case with regard to the persons qualified by the rest of the terms under discussion, *viz peṭakin*, *traipiṭikā* and *vinayadhara*. To sum up the discussion, of all the terms discussed so far, *traipiṭakopādhyāya* and *vināyaka* primarily denote a teacher and *traipiṭaka* and *pañchanaikāyika* can be understood to mean a teacher by their association with their

pupils. The remaining terms cannot be taken to denote a teacher from the contexts in which they occur, though the individuals qualified by them might have been engaged in teaching.

Unlike the Buddhist teachers the Jaina teachers are known by only a few terms in the epigraphs, one such term being *ächārya*. This term occurs in the Jaina epigraphs of the Gupta period. Thus, *ächārya* Vīradēva is mentioned in an inscription[28] from Rājgir. Similarly, *ächārya* Gōśarman is mentioned in the Udayagiri cave inscription[29] of the time of Kumāragupta, dated in 425-26 A.D. and another inscription[30] of the same king, from Mathurā, refers to Dattilāchārya. Further, the Pāhārpura copper-plate grant[31], dated in 479 A.D. refers to the *Śramaṇächarya* Guhanandin.

Vāchaka is another term denoting a Jaina teacher. This word primarily means a speaker or a reader, but from the contexts in which it occurs in epigraphs it may be taken in the sense of a Jaina teacher. The term *vāchaka* occurs in the Jaina epigraphs of the post-Mauryan period, from Mathurā. At least in four such occurrences[32] disciples *(śishyas)* of the *vāchakas* are mentioned. It becomes evident from this that the *vāchakas* were Jaina teachers.

A third term denoting a Jaina teacher is *gaṇin*. Here again this term is found in the Jaina inscriptions of the post-Mauryan period, from Mathurā. It primarily means 'having a following, having many disciples[33]'. Like the term *vāchaka* this term too is found associated with disciples[34] thereby confirming its sense of a teacher. In one case[35] both the terms *vāchaka* and *gaṇin* have been employed simultaneously to qualify a person and hence it is not possible to establish a gradation between these two terms. We also have epigraphical references[36] for the post-Mauryan period to show that there were female Jaina teachers. But it is to be noted that they are not qualified by any one of the terms denoting a teacher which we have mentioned above. It is only from the mention of their disciples that we come to know that they were engaged in teaching.

As has been stated already, it is only from the Gupta period that we come across references to Brahmanical teachers. Here we have only two terms, *viz.*, *ächārya* and *upādhyāya* both of which denote a teacher. Thus, Śaiva *ächāryas* are mentioned in the Mathurā pilaster inscription[37] of Chandragupta II, dated in the year 61 and the *ächāryas* Sōmatrāta, Vishṇutrāta and Vasudatta are referred to in the Tuśām rock inscription[38] of about the 5th century A.D. Likwise, *upādhyāya* Yaśastrāta is mentioned in the same inscription just referred to. Here he is given the titles of both *ächārya* and *upādhyāya*. *Upādhyāya* Mātusvāmin is referred to in the Sumaṇḍala plates[39] of the time of Prithvīvigraha, dated in 569 A.D. and as many as six *upādhyāyas* figure in the Bōndā plates[40] of Mahāśiva Tīvara, dated in the year 5.

We have already explained the difference between an *ächārya* and an *upādhyāya* as stated in the *Manusmṛiti*. This authority defines an *ächārya* as "one who invests a boy with the sacred thread and instructs him in the *Vēdas* together with their *Kalpas* and mysteries"

(upanīya tu yaḥ śishyaṁ vēdam-adhyāpayet dvijaḥ | sa-kalpaṁ sa-rahasyaṁ cha tam=āchāryaṁ prachakshyatē ||)[41]; and an *upādhyāya* as "an instructor, who instructs for wages, in only a part of the *Vēda* and the *Vēdāṅgas" (ēkadēśaṁ tu vēdasya vēdāṁgāny=api vā punaḥ | yō=dhyāpayati vṛity=artham-upādhyāyaḥ sa uchyatē ||)*[42].

As regards the composite designation *āchāryōpādhyāya* of Yaśastrāta of the Tuśām inscription referred to above, Bhandarkar[43] takes the word *upādhyāya* in this compound word to mean a priest or pontiff.' It is redundant to explain that besides the *āchāryas* and *upādhyāyas*, all Brāhmaṇas, versed in the three or four *Vēdas (trivēdins* and *chaturvēdins)* and the *bhaṭṭas* (learned Brāhmaṇas), all of whom figure in the charters recording land grants to Brāhmaṇas issued during the Gupta and post-Gupta periods, must have engaged themselves in the teaching of Brahmanical sacred literature, for teaching *(adhyāpana)* was one of the duties *(shaṭkarmas)* of the Brāmaṇas and the very purpose of the land grants was to promote Brahmanical learning.

Two epigraphs[44] of the post-Mauryan period, one from Parkham and the other from Koṇḍāṇē refer to disciples of sculptors and a third[45] one from Banavāsi in Karnataka states that a Nāga-image was made by Naṭaka, pupil *(sisa)* of the teacher *(āchariya)* Idamoraka. These references tend to show that the teachers of different vocations, like stone-cutting, carving, etc., too were termed *āchāryas*. However, we have not come across such instances in the North Indian inscriptions of the period under study. It may be noted that even to this day goldsmiths and carpenters are known as *āchāris* in parts of South India.

Students

Various terms like *śishya, antēvāsin*, etc., were used to denote a student. We have already noted that the term *antēvāsin* has been employed to mean a student in the Aśokan inscriptions. We have also several examples of the application of this term to the Buddhist and Jaina students in the epigraphs[46] of the post-Mauryan period. Similarly, the term *śishya* is used for the Buddhist and Jaina students in the epigraphs[47] of this period. On the basis of their frequency of occurrence in the epigraphs of the post-Mauryan period, we may suggest that the Buddhists favoured the word *antēvāsin* and the Jains, the word *śishya*. The words *śishya* and *prašishya* (a disciple's disciple) with reference to the Jaina monks are met with in the Pāhārpur copper-plate grant[48], dated in 479 A.D. A solitary instance of the use of the term *śaiksha* (Prakrit *sejha)* denoting a student is found in an inscription[49] from Sāñchi. The terms *antēvāsini*,[50] *śishyā*[51] and *śisinī*[52] are used for the female students of both Buddhism and Jainism in the inscriptions of the post-Mauryan period.

As in the case of the teachers of the Brahmanical disciplines, we get epigraphical references to the Vedic students only from the Gupta period. Two terms, *viz sabrahmachārin* and *chhātra* have been used to denote a Vedic student. There are not many instances of the use of the second term. Thus, the term *sabrahmachārin* occurs in the two copper-plate

charters[53] of *Mahārāja* Hastin, and in a number of Maitraka grants[54], whereas the term *chhātra* occurs only in the two Kanās plates[55] of Lōkavigraha-bhaṭṭāraka and Bhānudatta. The first record is dated in 599-600 A.D and the second one belongs to the 7th century A.D. We have not come across epigraphical references to the female students of Brahmanical learning during the period under discussion.

Subjects of study

It is quite heartening to note that one of the Aśokan inscriptions furnishes a list of religious texts he prescribed for not only the monks and nuns, but also for laymen and laywomen. The following is the list of these texts as found in the Calcutta-Bairāṭ Rock inscription[56] (also called the Bhābrū Edict) and as enumerated by Bhandarkar[57] together with their identification :

1. Vinaya-samukase.
2. Aliya-vasāni=Ariya-vaṁsa (Aṅguttara N., II. 27).
3. Anāgata-bhayāni *(ibid.*, III, 103).
4. Muni-gāthā=Muni-sutta (Sutta-nipāta, p. 36).
5. Moneya-sute=Nālaka-sutta (*ibid.*, pp. 131-34).
6. Upatisa-pasina=Rathavinīta-sutta (Majjhima N., I. 146-51).
7. Lāghulovāda=Rāhulovāda-sutta (*ibid.*, p. 414).

Regarding the identification of the Vinaya-samukase, Bhandarkar[58] writes: " And the words ..... lead to the surmise that in the Tuvataka Sutta we have Aśoka's *Vinaya-samukase*, Vinaya *par excellence*." Thus, this list gives us some idea of the Buddhist literature that was studied in the days of Aśoka.

The epigraphs of the post-Mauryan period mainly pertain to Buddhism and Jainism and it is from the Gupta period and onwards that we come across the epigraphical references to the Vedic religion. The various terms employed to denote Buddhist teachers, that we have explained already, themselves state the different subjects studied by the students of that faith. Some of these texts have been included in the Aśokan inscription referred to above. Thus, the three *piṭakas (tripiṭaka)*, the three classes of Buddhist writings, *viz.*, the *Sūtra- piṭaka*, the *Vinaya-piṭaka* and the *Abhidharma-piṭaka*, and the five *nikāyas*, *viz.*, the *Dīgha-nikāya*, the *Majjhima-nikāya*, the *Khuddaka- nikāya*, the *Saṁyutta-nikāya* and the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* were taught to the students. The separate mention of a Vinaya-teacher *(Vinayadhara or Vinayaṁdhara)* in an inscription[59] from Bōdh-Gayā and another[60] from Amarāvatī in the south, seems to indicate the relative importance of the *Vinayapiṭaka* as a subject for study. Unlike the terms used for the Buddhist teachers those of the Jaina teachers do not indicate the subjects of study. Thus, the terms *āchārya, vāchaka* and *gaṇin* are of no help to know the subjects that were studied by the Jaina students. Nor do we come across independent epigraphic references to the Jaina literature.

As regards the Brahmanical learning, of which we get epigraphical references from the Gupta period and onwards, the *Vēdas* were the chief constituents of the subject of study. The Nālandā plate[61] of Samudragupta refers to a Brāhmaṇa versed in the three *Vēdas (traividya)* and at least two of the Maitraka charters[62] refer to the communities of the Brāhmaṇas versed in the three *Vēdas (traividyasāmānya)*. Likewise, the communities of the Brāhmaṇas versed in the four *Vēdas (chāturvidyasāmānya* and *chāturvaidya samūha)* are mentioned in the Indōr copper-plate inscription[63] of Skandagupta, the recently discovered charters[64] of *Mahārāja* Bhuluṇḍa, *Mahārāja* Svāmidāsa and others who were the tribal rulers of Madhya Pradesh and probably owed allegiance to the Gupta monarchs as can be gathered from their title *paramabhaṭṭārakapādānudhyāta*, and in a number of Maitraka charters[65]. Further, more than a hundred Brāhmaṇas belonging to the *chāturvidyasāmānya* of the Ananta-Nārāyaṇa temple are mentioned in the Tipperah copper-plate grant[66] of Lōkanātha, dated in 650 A.D. Thus, there were two traditions, one recognising only three *Vēdas* and the other, all the four of them. But what is important here is the fact that the *Vēdas* were the chief among the subjects of the Brahmanical studies. Besides these collective terms, the individual *Vēdas* are also mentioned independently. Such references mostly occur in the land grants of the Maitrakas of Valabhi. Thus, the *Rigvēda* is referred to by the term *Bahvṛich*[67], the white *Yajurvēda*, by the term *Vājasanēya*[68], the *Sāmavēda*, by the term *Chhandōga*[69] and the *Atharvavēda*, by its own name[70], in the Maitraka charters. A statistical analysis of these grants made to the students of the four *Vēdas* shows that the *Sāmavēda* was the favourite subject of the Vedic students receiving land grants from the Maitraka rulers or that the latter had a special liking for this *Vēda*. Besides the Maitraka grants, there are a few other instances of the mention of the individual *Vēdas*. Thus, the Indōr copper-plate inscription[71] of Skandagupta mentions a student of *Sāmavēda (Chhandōga)* and the Nirmaṇḍa copper-plate inscription[72] of the *Mahāsāmanta* and *Mahārāja* Samudrasēna, dated in 612-13 A.D., refers to a body of Brāhmaṇas who studied the *Atharvavēda* at the *agrahāra* of Nirmaṇḍa *(Nirmaṇḍ-āgrahār-Āthārvvaṇa-vra(brā)hmaṇa-stōmāya*, Text, ll.7- 8). The Mandasōr stone inscription[73] of Yaśōdharman and Vishṇuvardhana, dated in 533-34 A.D. refers to a race of *Naigamas*. A *Naigama* is an interpreter of Vedic quotations and words[74]. Therefore, we may hold that there were texts on the interpretations of the Vedic words forming part of the Vedic studies and the *Naigamas* specialised in this branch.

Regarding the other religious subjects we have a few references in the epigraphs of the Gupta period. Thus, in the Mandasōr inscription[75] of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman some members of the weavers' guild are stated to have mastered the science of (Vedic) astronomy *(jyōtisha)*, and the reference to an *āchārya* of the Yōga - philosophy *(Yōgāchārya)* in the Tusām rock inscription[76] of about the 5th century A.D. suggests that this system of philosophy was studied in the Gupta age. Of the two great epics, *Mahābhārata* alone finds a mention in the inscriptions of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods[77]. At the end of the land grants certain verses from this work have been

quoted as imprecations. They are too well known to be quoted here. In the Khōh copper-plate inscription[78] of *Mahārāja* Śarvanātha there is the expression *uktaṁ= cha Mahābhāratē śatasāhasryāṁ saṁhitāyāṁ* (Text, l.19), which indicates that *Śatasāhasrī-saṁhitā* was a section of the *Mahābhārata* or, more likely, that the whole of the epic was known by that name. Citation of the verses from this work as imprecations and the word *saṁhitā* in the name *Śatasāhasrī-Saṁhitā* clearly indicate that the *Mahābhārata* was considered more a work on *Dharmaśāstra* rather than a literary composition. The Sēnakapāṭ inscription[79] of the time of Śivagupta Bālārjuna of about the 7th century A.D., recording certain land grants to a Śiva temple, stipulates among other things that the Śaiva ascetics in the temple should arrange for the initiation of people into Śaiva faith and for the exposition of the Śaiva doctrine *(samayasya vyākhyā)*. Thus, it becomes evident that the Śaiva doctrines were systematically taught by the *Śaivāchāryas*. Lastly, in the Khōh copper-plate inscription[80] of *Mahārāja* Saṁkshōbha, dated in 528- 29 A.D., Suśarman, the founder of the royal family is extolled as 'one who had learned the whole truth of the fourteen sections of the science' *(Chaturdaśa-vidyāsthāna-vidita-paramārthasya*, Text, ll.3-4). The fourteen sections of the science mentioned here are thus enumerated in a verse :

shaḍaṅga-miśritā vēdā dharmaśāstraṁ purāṇakaṁ |
mīmāṁsā tarkaṁ=api cha etā vidyāś=chaturdaśa [81] ||

Thus, the four *Vēdas*, six *Vēdaṅgas*, *Purāṇas*, *Mīmāṁsā*, *Nyāya* and the *Dharmaśāstra*, which constitute the fourteen fold science were studied in the Gupta period. In this connection we may note that the Faridpur copper-plate inscription[82] of the time of Dharmāditya, of the 6th century A.D., records a land grant to a Brāhmaṇa devoted to the study of the six *Vēdāṅgas (shaḍaṅg-ādhyāyin)*.

So far we have discussed the religious subjects of study, references to which abound in the epigraphs of the period of our study. But certain secular subjects also find direct or indirect mention in the inscriptions. As for the study of alphabets and languages, the large number of inscriptions itself bears witness to the literacy on the part of those who wrote the inscriptions and those for whom they were meant. Besides, there are several references to the art of writing in the inscriptions. Thus, the Aśokan Edicts are termed *dharmalipi* and some of these records[83] refer to the writers *(lipikara)*. In epigraphs[84] of the subsequent period these writers were known by the term *lēkhaka*. One such inscription[85] refers to the royal scribe *(rājalipikara)* Subāhita. Most of the epigraphs of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods contain the names of the writers at the end. Brāhmī with its different stages of development, and Kharōshṭhī are the alphabets employed in the epigraphs of the period under study. As regards the languages studied, it is the languages used in the inscriptions themselves that help us to form some opinion. The earliest inscriptions of North India are in the Prakrit language with its different dialects and Sanskrit is first noticed in the inscriptions of about the 1st century B.C. By the end of the 3rd century A.D. Sanskrit replaced Prakrit in the epigraphs of North India. Thus, the Brāhmī and

Kharōshṭhī alphabets and Prakrit and Sanskrit languages were studied during the period of our study. However, the use of the Kharōshṭhī script was comparatively much limited in terms of time and space.

As regards the internal evidence, the mention of the Prakrit and Sanskrit languages by their names is to be found in the epigraphs of the Gupta period onwards. Thus, in the Mandasōr stone inscription[86] of Yaśōdharman and Vishnuvardhana, dated in 533-34 A.D., Sanskrit and Prakrit poets are mentioned, and in one of the Maitraka grants[87] king Guhasēna is praised as a skilled composer in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhraṁśa (*sanskrita- prākrit-āpabhraṁśā-bhāshā-traya-pratibaddha-prabandha-rachanā-nipuṇatar-āntaḥkaraṇō*, Text, ll.5-6).

Though forming part of study of a language, grammar was treated as a special subject of study in ancient India. With reference to royal education we have noted already that grammar was one of the subjects studied by the Kshatrapa king Rudradāman. In the subsequent period, Vīrasēna Śāba, a minister of Chandragupta II is described, in the Udayagiri cave inscription[88], as well-versed in grammar and certain other subjects. The use of the words *sandhi, vigraha, samāsa, guṇa* and *vriddhi*, all of which are technical terms of Sanskrit grammar, and the reference to the grammarian Pāṇini by the term *śālāturīya*, in a number of Maitraka records[89], bear testimony to the popularity of the Pāṇinian grammar as a subject for study.

Arithmetic or accountancy *(gaṇanā)* was an important subject of study. It was studied by Khāravela in the 2nd century B.C. The Brāhmī inscription[90] on a wooden pillar from Kirārī, assigned to the 2nd century A.D., mentions an accountant *(gaṇaka)* in the list of royal officials. We have not come across references to this subject in the epigraphs of the subsequent period.

The subjects studied by the minister Vīrasēna Śāba referred to above include polity *(artha=arthaśāstra)*, logic *(nyāya)* and popular usage and custom *(lōka=vārttā)*, besides grammar[91]. We may note that logic also finds a place in the list of subjects studied by Rudradāman.

We have an interesting epithet, *viz., trisahasravidya* applied to a Brāhmaṇa donee figuring in the Sārangarh copper-plate inscription[92] of the Śarabhapurīya king Mahā-Sudēva whose reign has been dated between *c.* 571 A.D. to *c.* 580 A.D. by Shastri[93]. Commenting on this term, Hīralal[94] writes: "The original is *trisahasra-vidya*, which Dr. Rājēndralāl has taken to be a part of the proper name Bhāskarasvāmi, but I think it is an adjectival phrase eulogising his learning which extended to the knowledge of three thousand of what is not stated. Probably he knew three thousand *ślōkas* of some very important and difficult work, considered as a great achievement in those times". This explanation is quite convincing, but we may also suggest that *trisahasra* could have been a synonym of a composition consisting of three thousand verses and one who mastered it was called a *trisahasra-vidya*. For, the term *trisahasra* is comparable with *Śatasāhasrī-*

Saṁhitā, a name given to the *Mahābhārata* or a section of it to which a reference has already been made.

Writing Materials

Regarding the materials used for writing, epigraphs of the Aśokan and post-Mauryan periods contain no information. But the inscriptions of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods have some direct and indirect references to this subject. Thus, the Kurud plates[95] of the Śarabhapurīya king Narēndra, whose reign has been fixed in *c.* 500-25 A.D. by Shastri[96], state that the grant recorded in these plates was originally made by means of a charter recorded on palm-leaves (*tāla-patra- śāsanēna svapuṇy-ābhivṛiddhayē dattakaḥ*, Text, ll.6-7). It is further stated that the palm-leaf charter was burnt in a house fire and that it was endorsed by the king by means of issuing a copper-plate charter. Likewise, in the Talēśvara copper-plate inscription[97] of Dyutivarman, assigned to the 6th century A.D., there is a reference to the land grants made by the ancestors of the king by means of charters written on cloth-sheets *(paṭa)* which were burnt by fire. It is interesting to note that books are actually mentioned in one of the charters[98] of the Maitraka king Guhasēna, dated in the year 240. This record, registering the gift of a village for the maintenance of the resident monks of the Duḍḍāmahāvihāra, enumerates 'acquisition of books of the holy faith' (*saddhamasya pustakōpakra* ..., Text, pl. II, l.7), as one of the purposes of the grant. Similarly, in the Kailān copper-plate inscription[99] of Śrīdhāraṇarāta of the 7th century A.D., there is a reference to the writing of the Buddhist religious texts (*dharmmasya lēkhana-vāchan-ārtham*, Text, l.23). Thus, it becomes evident that palm-leaves and cloth-sheets were used for writing books and documents.

Educational Institutions

The importance of the Buddhist monasteries as centres of learning and education is too well-known. Beginning with the establishment of a few in northern India during the life-time of the Buddha himself, the monasteries, in subsequent centuries, became important centres of education. Mookerji[100] writes: "The history of the Buddhist-system of education is practically that of the Buddhist order or Saṁgha. Buddhist education and learning centred round monasteries as Vedic culture centred round the sacrifice. The Buddhist world did not offer any educational opportunities apart from or independently of its monasteries. All education, sacred as well secular, was in the hands of the monks. They had the monopoly of learning and of leisure to impart it. They were the only custodians and bearers of the Buddhist culture". Thus, the importance of the *Vihāras* as the Buddhistic educational centres cannot be exaggerated. So far as the epigraphical source is concerned, it only informs us about the construction of the *Vihāras* and the donations made to them by the rulers and the general public. Details of the system of education that prevailed in these *Vihāras* is not forthcoming from the epigraphs.

Though Aśoka is credited with the construction of 84,000 *Vihāras*[101], it is rather strange that none of his records refer to this institution. However, a recently discovered epigraph[102] from Narasinghgarh, belonging to about the 5th century A.D., informs that the rock-shelter containing this inscription and the other rock-shelters nearby were then traditionally known as having served as *Vihāras* right from days of Aśoka (*Aśoka prakālikay-ānuśruta-prāktana- śūnya-vihārēshu*). It is only in the epigraphs of the post-Mauryan period onwards that we get references to the *Vihāras*. Thus, both the Brāhmī and Kharōshṭhī inscriptions of this period generally record some donations made to the *Vihāras*[103]. In most of the cases these *Vihāras* are named after their authors, as for example, the *Vihāra* of Amohaasi[104], the Dharmadēva *Vihāra*[105], the *Vihāra* of Vespasi[106], Kanishka's *Vihāra*[107], etc. In this connection the terms *vihārasvāmin*[108] and *vihārasvāminī*[109], occurring with reference to some of the *Vihāras*, are worthy of note. Of this early period, a clay sealing[110] from Intwa refers to the *Mahārāja-Rudrasēna-vihāra*. This king is identified with Rudrasēna I of the dynasty of Chashṭana.

Subsequently, the epigraphs and seals of the Gupta and post- Gupta periods refer to a number of *Vihāras*. There was the great holy monastery (*śrī-mahā-vihāra*) at Kākanādabōṭa (Sāñchī) in 412-13 A.D.[111]. The Sāñchī stone inscription[112], dated in 450-51 A.D., shows that this *Vihāra* continued to survive in prosperity until the reign of either Kumāragupta or Skandagupta. The Mathurā stone image inscription[113], dated in 549-50 A.D., which does not refer to any king, mentions another monastery named Yaśōvihāra, which must have been situated in Mathurā itself. The Kura inscription[114] of the time of Tōramāṇa Shāhi Javuvla records the erection of a *Vihāra* by Roṭa-Siddhavriddhi who is called *Vihārasvāmin*. From the seals belonging to the Gupta period we come to know of at least two monasteries; *viz.*, the Ghōshitārāma-Mahāvihāra[115] and the Dvaitavanārāma-vihāra[116]. The Maitraka rulers of Valabhī did yeoman service to Buddhism. A number of *Vihāras* were built and liberal grants made to them under the Maitraka rule. Virji[117] has listed as many as fourteen *Vihāras* figuring in the Maitraka Charters. It is noteworthy that seven of these *Vihāras* were attached to the Duḍḍā-Mahāvihāra which was at the head of a group of *Vihāras* (*Vihāra-maṇḍala*) and that the *Yaksha-Sūra-Vihāra* together with two others were reserved for nuns. Virji[118] further refers to five more *Vihāras* which occur in the Maitraka charters and whose names are not preserved. Thus, it becomes evident that Buddhist education received great patronage under the Maitraka rulers.

Our knowledge of Nālandā as a great centre of learning is entirely due to the accounts of the Chinese travellers. Epigraphical sources of our period have hardly anything to state on this subject. However, we may notice here two inscriptions which are relevant to the subject. Hiuen Tsang[119] tells us that the rise of the Nālandā *Saṅghārāma* was due to the munificence of Śakrāditya, who became, according to him, its founder. Now, a fragmentary sealing[120] from Nālandā bears a legend in Gupta characters. It states that Śakrāditya 'set up' something (not clear due to the fragmentary nature of the sealing) which was connected with the great *bhikshu* community of the four quarters. It is to be noted that the king

Śakrāditya mentioned by Hiuen Tsang has generally been identified with Kumāragupta I[121] of the Imperial Gupta dynasty. Therefore, it is quite likely that the king referred to in the Nālandā sealing just mentioned was Kumāragupta I himself and that the legend on the sealing purported to record the construction of a monastery by him.

The Nālandā stone inscription[122] of the reign of Yaśōvarmadēva of the 6th century A.D. mentions king Bālāditya as the builder of a great sanctuary at Nālandā. This epigraph refers to the row of *Vihāras* at Nālandā, whose tops touched the clouds (*yasyām=ambu-dhar-āvalēhi-śikhara-śrēṇī-vihār-āvali*, Text, ll.6-7) and to the scholars at Nālandā who were well-known for their knowledge of the sacred texts and arts (*sad-agama-kalā-vikhyāta-vidvaj-janāḥ*, Text, l.6).

It is only from the Gupta period onwards that we get epigraphical references to Vedic study. A vital difference between the educational system of the Buddhists and the Brāhmaṇas was that, whereas the former was monastic in nature, the latter, individualistic. According to the injunctions of the sacred texts, each Brāhmaṇa was required to devote himself to the cause of teaching in his individual capacity. In this sense each learned Brāhmaṇa was an educational institution by himself. Therefore, the expression educational institution with reference to Brahmanical studies can only denote a place where a number of Vedic teachers resided. This is more true of the period under discussion. With this preamble we may state that the *agrahāras*, the communities of the learned Brāhmaṇas (*traividya-sāmānya* and *chāturvidya-sāmānya*), and the *maṭhas* were the Vedic educational institutions prevailing during the period under study.

The word *agrahāra* means a land or village granted to the learned Brāhmaṇas for their sustenance. But by its invariable association with the learned Brāhmaṇas and students whose subjects of study, such as *Ṛigvēda*, etc., are stated in most of the cases, this word has come to connote a centre of Brahmanical studies. From the Gupta period onwards we get a number of epigraphical references to grants of *agrahāra* villages to the Brāhmaṇas. The Nālandā copper- plate inscription[123] of Samudragupta which seems to be the earliest epigraph to refer to the word *agrahāra*, records a grant of two villages as *agrahāra*. The Bihar stone pillar inscription[124] of Budhagupta is another imperial Gupta record to mention an *agrahāra* (whose name is not preserved). Among the contemporaries of the Guptas, a number of inscriptions of the Parivrājaka kings record grants of villages as *agrahāras*. Thus, the copper-plate inscriptions from Khōh[125], Majhgawām[126], Jabalpur[127] and Navagrāma grant[128] of *Mahārāja* Hastin, and the Betul plates[129] of Saṁkshōbha, record the grants of villages as *agrahāras*. The Khōh copper-plate inscription[130] of the Uchchakalpa king Jayanātha is another example of this kind. We do get some more examples of this kind belonging to this period. Of the post-Gupta period, the two copper-plate charters[131] of Harsha record grants of *agrahāra* villages. Of the copper-plate charters of the Maitraka kings of Valabhī, it is to be noted that very rarely do they refer to the term *agrahāra*. Thus we come across the names of only three *agrahāras*, *viz.*, the Audumbar-āgrahāra[132], Agastik-āgrahāra[133] and Anak-

āgrahāra[134]. The word *brahmadāya* or *brahmadēya* has been employed in the Maitraka charters to denote land grants to Brāhmaṇas.

As regards the communities of the *traividya* and *chāturvidya* Brāhmaṇas, we have already referred to some of the epigraphs mentioning the expressions *traividyasāmānya* and *chāturvidyasāmānya*. These expressions stand for the community of a number of Brāhmaṇas well-versed in three or four *Vēdas*, settled at a place and engaged in the learning and teaching of the *Vēdas*. The Maitraka charters mention a number of places where such communities of *traividya* and *chāturvidya* Brāhmaṇas had settled. Thus, Daśapura[135] and Valabhī[136] were the settlements of the *traividya* Brāhmaṇas, and , Simhapura[137], Ānarttapura[138], Odumbaragahvara[139], Mahichhaka[140], Nandapura[141], Valabhī[142] and Kuśahṛida[143] were the places where *chāturvidya* Brāhmaṇas had their settlements. It may be noted that Valabhī was a centre where both the *traividya* and *chāturvidya* Brāhmaṇas had settled.

A number of inscriptions of our period refer to the construction of and grants to temples. Thus, the Tumain inscription[144] of Kumāragupta I records the construction of a temple for Śiva by Śrīdēva and his four brothers; the Chhōṭīsādṛī inscription[145] of *Mahārāja* Gauri, dated in 491 A.D., records the building of a great temple for the Dēvī by the king; one of the Dāmōdarpur copper-plates[146] of the reign of Budhagupta refers to the construction of two shrines and two store-rooms for two different deities; and the Sohāwal copper-plate inscription[147] of the Uchchhakalpa king Śarvanātha, dated in 510-11 A.D., records the grant of a village as an *agrahāra* for the maintenance of services like *bali, charu*, etc., in the temple of Kārttikēya. Likewise, the Talēśvara copper-plate inscription[148] of Dyutivarman, of about the 6th century A.D., refers to the various services, *viz., bali, charuka, sattra*, bathing with curds, milk and ghee, to the god Vīraṇēśvara and the Bhadrēṇiyaka grant[149] of the Maitraka king Śīlāditya I refers to vocal and instrumental music besides the customary services to be conducted in the Sun temple at the village Bhadrēṇiyaka. Such instances can be multiplied. What we would like to state with reference to these instances is the fact that none of them refers to the temple as an educational centre directly or indirectly. Further, the mention of a number of services like *dhūpa, dīpa, naivēdya*, etc., and the non-mention of Vedic scholars or students in these inscriptions tend to indicate on a superficial study that temples in North India, during the period under study, were merely religious centres and had nothing to do with Brahmanical education. This is true to a large extent. But it is not the whole truth, for we have at least a few instances to show that some of the temples did contribute to the Brahmanical education.

The Kanās plate[150] of Lōkavigraha-bhaṭṭāraka, dated in 599-600 A.D., records the grant of a village for the purpose of institution of *bali, charu* and *sattra* at the *maṭha* of the Maṇināgabhaṭṭāraka of Chaikāmbaka or Ekāmbaka and for the maintenance of the Brāhmaṇas of different *gōtras*, who were students of the Maitrāyaṇīya school of the *Yajurvēda*. Similarly, another charter[151], from the same place, of Bhānudatta, who

flourished between 619 and 643 A.D., records the gift of a village to the same deity and refers to the same Brāhmaṇa students of the Maitrāyaṇīya school who were the actual recipients of the grant. Therefore, we may safely hold that the *maṭha* of Maṇināgabhaṭṭāraka was verily an institution of Vedic studies. In this connection we have to note that one of the meanings of the word *matha* is 'school' or 'college'. The Vasantgaḍh inscription[152] of the king Varmalāta, dated in 625 A.D., records the construction of the temple of the goddess Kshēmāryā, by a *goshṭhī*. Though not so stated, it is possible to hold that this temple could have been a centre of Brahmanical learning. For, Rājjila, the chief during whose governance this temple was constructed, has been described as having lavished his wealth on Brāhmaṇas, personages deserving hospitality, subordinates and men skilled in arts (*brāhmaṇ- ātithi-bhṛity-ādi-kalāvatsu*, Text, l.8). The Tipperah copper-plate grant[153] of Lōkanātha, dated in 650 A.D., records a grant of land by the king to his own *Mahāsāmanta* Pradōshaśarman for erecting a temple of Ananta-Nārāyaṇa, for the daily worship of this god and for the dwelling of more than a hundred Brāhmaṇas versed in the four *Vēdas (chāturvidya)*. Now, here the term *maṭha* is employed to denote the temple (*ētadīya-maṭhē Bhagavatō=nanta- nārāyaṇasya* Text, l.32). But by its association with a large number of *chāturvidya* Brāhmaṇas this word seems to denote a temple which was a centre of Vedic education. The Aphsaḍ stone inscription[154] of Ādityasēna, assignable to the 7th century A.D., records that *Mahādēvī* Śrīmatī, the mother of the king, constructed a religious college (*maṭha*) and gave it to religious people. Here the use of the word *maṭha* in the sense of a religious college is beyond any doubt, for there is no mention of a deity associated with this word, and secondly, the *maṭha* is stated to have been entrusted to religious people, obviously meaning Vedic scholars and students. The Muṇḍēśvarī inscription[155] of Udayasēna, dated in the [Harsha] year 30, records the construction of a *maṭha* of the *dēvakula* of Nārāyaṇa by the *Kulapati* Bhāgudalana. This is a very important record furnishing an unambiguous evidence to the existence of the temple- colleges in North India. The expression *maṭham= ētat= kāritakaṁ [śrī-] Nārāyaṇa-dēvakulasya*, (Text, l.6) makes it clear that what was built was a religious college building attached to the temple of śrī-Nārāyaṇa. Another noteworthy point is that this building was caused to be constructed by Bhāgudalana who is described as a *Kulapati*. This word ordinarily means the head or chief of a family. But in its technical sense it denotes a sage who feeds and teaches 10,000 pupils. Apte[156] quotes the following verse to define *kulapati* : *munmāṁ daśasāhasraṁ yō= nnadān-ādi pōshaṇāt | adhyāpayati vipraṛshir-asau kulapatiḥ smṛitaḥ* || Bhāgudalana was a *Kulapati* in the technical sense of the term and not a mere head of the family, because of his association with the *maṭha*. Lastly, the Kudārkoṭ stone inscription[157], assignable to the 7th century A.D., records the erection of a building at Gavīdhumat (the ancient name of Kudārkoṭ) for the *traividya* Brāhmaṇas, by a personage named Harivarman. This building was probably built in memory of the son of Harivarman named Takshadatta who was killed in battle. We have every reason to hold that this building was actually meant for housing an institution for Vedic studies. Firstly, Takshadatta, in whose memory the building in question was built, is stated to have been

devoted to the preservation of the three *Vēdas (trayī- rakshaṇa-dīkshitaḥ*); secondly, it was a beautiful palatial building (*uchchair-achɪkarad= uru-sthira-chāru-chitram traividyamandiram=udāram-idaṁ sa sādhuḥ* Text, l.11) built at Gavidhumat where the quarters of the heavens were filled with the noise of the constant explanation of Vedic lore (*santata-vēda-vidyā-vyākhyāna- ghōsha-badhirɪkṛita-diṅ-mukhē=smin*, Text, ll.10-11); and lastly, the names of the six *traividya* Brahmaṇas, the first occupants of the building, are mentioned at the end of this record. These instances attest to the existence of the temple-colleges in North India during the period of our study.

Several seals of temples such as those of Avimuktēśvara[158], Gabhastɪśvara[159], Pɪtakēśvara[160], Kalaśeśvara[161], etc., belonging to the Gupta and post-Gupta periods have been discovered at Rājghāt. Discussing these seals Thaplyal[162] writes: " many of these (temples), like some of their modern counterparts at Varanasi, had schools attached to them. It were primarily such institutions which were responsible for making Varanasi an important centre of Brahmanical learning. In India, education in the distant past, was generally imparted by the *guru* in his own *āśrama* and the system of temple-cum-educational institutions was quite possibly the result of Brahmanical reaction to Buddhist monasteries which were fast growing into centres of learning."

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103. *List.*, Nos. 12, 13, 43, 140, 161, etc.; *C.I.I.*, Vol. II, Part I, pp. 101, 128, 137, 141, 150, etc.
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110. K.K. Thaplyal, *SAIS.*, p. 207.
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116. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
117. K.J. Virji, *AHS.*, pp, 172 ff.
118. *Ibid.*, p. 173, n. 9.
119. *Watters.*, Vol. II, p. 164.
120. *SAIS.*, pp. 213-14.
121. R.K. Mookerji, *GE.*, p. 75; H.C. Raychaudhuri, *PHAI.*, p. 570.
122. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XX, pp. 37 ff. wherever we have referred to this inscription in this book we have taken it as belonging to the 6th century following Hirananda Sastri (*Ibid.*, p. 40) who identifies Yaśōvarmmadēva of this inscription with Yaśōdharma of the Mandasōr inscriptions. However, R.K. Mookerji (*AIE.*, p. 562) holds that the former was probably Yaśōvarmmadēva of Kanauj (*c.* 728-45 A.D.).
123. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 3.
124. *Ibid.*, No. 41.
125. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No. 22.
126. *Ibid.*, No. 23.
127. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 264 ff.
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CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS

In this chapter we discuss in running fashion the religious conditions that prevailed throughout the period of our study. Buddhism, Jainism, Vedic religion, Śaivism, Vaishṇavism and the minor sects are the various topics dealt with here. These cults prevailed during various epochs of the period of our study with lesser or greater degree of intensity, depending upon their own intrinsic values and their appeal to the minds of the rulers and the public at large. What follows is not a comprehensive history of these religions, but only an account of such details as royal patronage and actual practices, pertaining to these religions as found depicted in the inscriptions.

Buddhism

The greatest contribution of India to world civilization is, perhaps, Buddhism. Though Buddhism lost its stronghold in India where it was born, it still counts one-third of the world's population as its followers. Buddhism, like Jainism, arose in the 6th century B.C. in the wake of Upanishadic speculations. This religion centres round the teachings of Gautama, the Buddha, one of the greatest thinkers and reformers that the world has ever known. It is well known that both Buddhism and Jainism revolted against the existing orthodox Brahmanical-Vedic system predominated by rituals and the ceremonies involving animal slaughter.

Aśoka's inscriptions have enough evidence to show that he was a staunch follower and ardent patron of Buddhism. They fully corroborate the tradition that he favoured Buddhism, and show that he was intimately acquainted with its tenets, legends and literature. This will be clear from the subjoined references.

(1) In the Calcutta -Bairāṭ rock-inscription[1] the king pays his respects to the *Saṁgha*, gives expression to his reverence to and faith in the Buddha, the *Dharma* and the *Saṁgha*, and recommends to monks and nuns, to laymen and laywomen, the study of seven 'expositions of the Dharma' selected by himself. These seven

texts have been actually traced in the Buddhist canon and have been explained in the chapter on education.

(2) In the Kauśāmbi[2], Sāñchi[3] and Sārnāth[4] pillar edicts he orders heretical monks and nuns to be expelled from the *Saṁgha*. This order of the king is known to the tradition of the Southern Buddhists[5].

(3) R.E. VIII[6] states that, when he had been anointed ten years, he paid a visit to *Sambodhi, i.e.* Bōdh-Gayā, the place where the Buddha had attained perfect knowledge.

(4) According to the Rummindēi pillar inscription[7], having been anointed twenty years, he came himself to the village of Lumbini and worshipped the spot where the Buddha Śākyamuni was born. Further, it is stated in this record that he exempted this village from the payment of a tax called *bali* and reduced the royal share of the produce of land to one-eighth in respect of this village.

(5) The Nigālī Sāgar pillar inscription[8] records that, when he had been anointed fourteen years, he enlarged the *stūpa* of the Buddha Kōnākamana (Kanaka-muni) to the double (of its original size), and that when he had been anointed [twenty] years, he came himself and worshipped that spot.

(6) The Kālsī[9] and Dhauli rocks[10] bear the figure of an elephant with the lables 'the best elephant' (*gajatame=Skt. gajōttama*) and 'the white (elephant)' (*seto=Skt. śvēta*). On the Girnār rock the elephant has been destroyed, but the existing label[11] (..... *rvasveto hasti sarvalōkasukhāharo nāma*) implies that the missing figure represented the Buddha, who is believed to have entered his mother's womb in the shape of a white elephant.

These six references clearly show that Aśoka had adopted the Buddhist religion in the course of his reign. Further, undeniable evidence is supplied by M.R.E. I[12] referring to his conversion to Buddhism and his stay with the *Saṁgha*. The Ahraura version[13] of this edict refers to the installation of the relics of the Buddha. Sircar[14] writes thus about this version : "Minor Rock Edict I is the only inscription of Aśoka which states that he set out on a long tour of pilgrimage, in the course of which the edict was promulgated, and the Ahraura version of the edict is the only Aśokan record which states that the pilgrimage was undertaken immediately after the installation of the relics of the Buddha on a platform no doubt for worship. This adds one more point to the evidence suggesting that Aśoka was a Buddhist and is also in agreement with Buddhist tradition." He holds that the installation of the relics was actually done by Aśoka[15]. To these references we may add a recently discovered epigraph[16] from a rock-shelter at Narasinghgarh (Rajgarh District, Madhya Pradesh) referring to the *vihāras* of the times of Aśoka (*Aśoka-prakālikay-ānuśruta-prāktana-śūnya- vihārēshu*). This epigraph, assigned to the 5th century A.D. on palaeographic grounds, is another evidence for Aśoka's close association with Buddhism.

A careful study of the preachings of Aśoka in his edicts shows that they are nothing but sacred Buddhist preachings culled out from various Pāli *Sūtras*. This has been conclusively established by Bhandarkar[17] who examines critically and more or less refutes the views expressed by various scholars which are based on such considerations as the non-reference to the fundamental principles of Buddhism like the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eight fold path and to *nirvāṇa*, and the mention of *svarga* as the desirable goal of practice of the *Dharma*. Bhandarkar's arguments to show that the *Dharma* preached by Aśoka is mainly based on the tenets of Buddhism may be summarised as follows :

(1) Buddhism has always consisted of two parts :
   (i) *Dhaṁma* for the monks and nuns, and
   (ii) *Dhaṁma* for the householders. Aśoka was a house-holder, at any rate he was so when he preached his *Dhaṁma;* and the people to whom he taught it were also house-holders, not men who had embraced the monastic life.

(2) The *Sigālovāda-sutta* comprised in the *Dīgha-Nikāya* of the Buddhist scriptures enumerates the courses of conduct, such as hearkening to parents, reverence to teachers, liberality and seemly behaviour towards friends, acquaintances and relatives, and towards Brāhmaṇa and Śramaṇa ascetics, and seemly behaviour towards slaves and servants, which Aśoka is never tired of inculcating in the minds of his people through his edicts.

(3) The qualities which constitute Aśoka's *Dhaṁma, viz., dayā, dāne, sache, sochaye, mādave* and *sādhave* or *kayāne*, correspond respectively to *ahiṁsā, dāna, sachcha, socheyya, saṁyama* and *sila*, all enumerated in a verse in the *Lakkhaṇa-sutta* of the *Dīgha-Nikāya.*

(4) The idea and phraseology of *Dhaṁma-maṅgala,* mentioned in R.E. IX, denoting the performance of the ethical practices specified by Aśoka as constituting *Dhaṁma,* is borrowed from the *Mahāmaṅgala-sutta* contained in the *Sutta-nipāta.*

(5) Similarly, the idea and phraseology of *Dhaṁma-dāna* (R.E. IX and XI), *Dhaṁma-anugraha* (R.E. IX) and *Dhaṁma-Saṁvibhāga* (R.E. XI), are borrowed from a Buddhist scripture called *Itivuttaka.*

(6) The contents of the R.E. XII wherein Aśoka exhorts his people not to praise one's own sect and condemn another's unduly, are a development of the theme set forth in the *Chūlaviyūha-sutta* and *Mahāviyūha-sutta* of the *Sutta-nipāta.*

(7) And lastly, according to Buddhism the doctrine of heaven and hell is especially the layman's religion, the higher attainments and the goal of *Nirvāṇa* being reserved for a *Bhikshu.* This was just the view of Buddha, who has more than once implied that a pious house-holder is born in the next world as a god in one of the heavens. It is therefore no wonder at all, if Aśoka regards *svarga* as the *summum bonum* to be attained for leading a virtuous life on earth.

Thus, it becomes evident that the *Dhaṁma* preached by Aśoka was not simple piety common to all religions, but the code of righteous practices laid down for a lay follower by Buddhism.

From the epigraphs of Aśoka we come to know the various measures adopted by him for the propagation of Buddhism. R.E. IV[18] states that Aśoka fostered and propagated *Dhaṁma* among his subjects by showing them the spectacles of the *vimānas, hastins* and *agni* or *jyotiḥ-skandhas,* representing the kinds of heavenly bliss that are in store for the good virtuous people in their next birth when they become gods. From R.E. VIII[19] we come to know that after his visit to Saṁbōdhi (Bōdhi Tree) Aśoka stopped his *vihāra-yātrās* and started instead the *Dharma-yātrās* in course of which he visited common people and propagated *Dhaṁma.* According to R.E. V[20] the posts of *Dharmamahāmātras* were created by Aśoka thirteen years after his coronation. These officers were occupied with all the religous sects for the establishment of *Dharma* and for the promotion of *Dharma* as well as for the welfare of those who were devoted to *Dharma.* And from R.E. XIII[21] we come to know that Aśoka's missionary activity had spread over a wide range which included not only the whole of India and Ceylon but also those parts of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, Epirus and Cyrene, which were subject to the Greek rulers.

Thus Aśoka laid solid foundation for the growth and spread of Buddhism which, in course of its career, rose from its status of a local sectarian creed of Eastern India to that of one of the principal religions of the world. The foregoing discussion clearly suggests that the reign of Aśoka was a glorious epoch in the history of Buddhism.

The Śuṅgas and Kāṇvas who replaced the Mauryan dynasty in the North were staunch supporters of Brahmanism. Further, Pushyamitra Śuṅga is described by certain Buddhist texts as a cruel persecutor of Buddhism. He is said to have destroyed monasteries and killed the monks in course of his march to Sākala where he declared a prize of one hundred gold coins on the head of each monk[22]. This seems to be a concocted story written by the Buddhist authors to viciate whatever reputation Pushyamitra could earn as a reviver of the Vedic sacrificial cult. For, it is a well known fact that the great Buddhist *stūpa* at Bhārhut and the fine gateway railings which surround the Sāñchi *stūpas* built by Aśoka were erected during the reign of the Śuṅgas. Thus, Buddhism does not seem to have suffered any great set-back during the reign of the immediate successors of the Mauryas in the North.

It is well known that the Indo-Greek king Menander (*c.* 114 B.C.) was deeply influenced by Buddhist philosophy. He is identified with king Milinda who is one of the two leading characters in the Milinda-pañha, 'Question of Milinda', a famous Buddhist text written in the form of a dialogue between the king and the Buddhist monk Nāgasēna. Menander's association with Buddhism is also known from the Bajaur relic-casket

inscription[23]. This epigraph states that the relic-casket was consecrated twice in the reign of Menander *(Minadrasa)*. Epigraphical sources show that Buddhism received the attention of the Indo-Greeks who ruled after Menander in the north- west India. Thus, the Swat Relic Vase inscription[24] records the establishment of the relics of the Lord Śākyamuni for the purpose of the security of many people *(bahujana-sthitaye)* by Theodoros, the *Meridarkh*. The title *Meridarkh* is the same as Greek Meridarkhes, denoting a district officer[25]. The Taxila copper-plate inscription[26] also mentions a person (name lost) with the title *Meridarkh*, who, together with his wife, founded a *stūpa* in honour of his mother and father for the presentation of a respectful offering. Further, the inscription[27] of the Tirath Rock on the border of Swat Kohistān also points to the popularity of Buddhism in the realm of Greek supremacy. This rock shows two large *pādukās* and below them a Kharōshṭhī inscription which reads: *Bodhasa Sakamunisa padani* (Foot-prints of the Buddha Śākyamuni). All these epigraphs are in Kharōshṭhī characters and assigned to the 1st century B.C. on palaeographical grounds. Lastly, the Kāldarra inscription[28] of the year 113 records the construction of a tank by a person bearing a Greek name in honour of all beings. The expression *sarvasapana puyae* which Konow[29] explains as *sarvasatvana puyae* clearly indicates that this is a Buddhistic record. Thus, it becomes evident that the Indo-Greek rulers patronised Buddhism.

Many of the Śaka rulers were devoted to Buddhism. The Taxila copper-plate[30] of Patika would show that in the year 78 during the reign of the Great Moga, Patika, son of *Kshaharāta* Liaka Kushulaka, established in Taxila a relic of the lord Śākyamuni and a *Saṅghārāma*, for the worship of all Buddhas and for the increase of the life and power of the *Kshatrapa*. This record has been palaeographically assigned to the end of the 2nd century B.C.

Again, the Mathurā Lion Capital inscription[31] states that Ayasia Kamuïa, the chief queen of the *Mahākshatrapa* Rājuvula established the relic of lord Śākyamuni, the Buddha, a *stupa* and *Saṅghārāma* for the order of the four quarters of the Sarvāstivādins. This record belongs to the 1st century A.D.

These records show the popularity of Buddhism, especially of the Sarvāstivādins, in the north-western region during the Śaka rule.

With the advent of the Kushāṇas on the political scene of North India Buddhism received a new lease of life. Kanishka I was the greatest of the Kushāṇa rulers. So far as the numismatic evidence goes he was eclectic in his religious outlook. But that he adopted Buddhism as his personal religion and was deeply interested in it, is clearly indicated by various archaeological and literary sources including the testimony of the Chinese pilgrims.

Kanishka built his capital in Peshawar (Purushapura) which already was an important centre of Buddhist art and religion and erected there a large *stūpa*. Cunningham and Foucher located the Kanishka *stūpa* in the mounds of the Shah-ji-ki-

dheri outside the Ganj gate of Peshawar. Dr. Spooner, in the course of his excavations of the mound, has confirmed this location of the *stūpa* as suggested by Cunningham and Foucher[32].

Dr. Spooner, who discovered the extensive ruins of the stūpa, found in it a relic chamber containing an inscribed metal relic-casket with sacred bones. The inscription[33] states that the "casket was made for the acceptance of the teachers of the Sarvāstivāda sect" and that one Agiśala was the architect in Kanishka's *Vihāra*. This epigraph is a clear proof of Kanishka's allegiance to Buddhism which is corroborated by the four different kinds of representation of Buddha on his gold and copper coins[34].

Kanishka was succeeded by his son Huvishka. The latter, like his father, was eclectic in his religious outlook as can be known from the portrayal on his coins of the divinities drawn from different pantheons, and Buddhism flourished side by side with other religions during his reign. A Buddhist inscription[35] on the base of a pillar from Mathurā, dated in the year 47, records a gift by the monk Jivaka, a native of Uḍiyana to the *Vihāra* of *Mahārāja Rājātirāja Devaputra* Huvishka. In the Wardak vase inscription[36] of the year 51, recording the establishment of the relic of the Lord Śākyamuni in the Vagramarega-Vihāra, in a *stūpa*, the root of bliss was enjoined principally for *Mahārāja Rājātirāja* Huvishka. These epigraphs seem to indicate that Buddhism was the personal religion of Huvishka. In fact, Baldev Kumar[37] holds that Huvishka was an ardent Buddhist. But according to Puri[38] the latter was personally disposed towards Brahmanism. It is difficult to ascertain Huvishka's personal religion, but undoubtedly he was a great patron of Buddhism like his father.

Huvishka was succeeded by Vāsudēva. His name and the fact that only Indian god Śiva and the Zoroastrian deities Ardoksho (corresponding to Lakshmi) and Nana (corresponding to Durgā) are represented on his coins[39], clearly indicate that Vāsudēva was completely Brahmanized. But like his predecessors, he too was tolerant of the religious creeds other than the one which he liked the most, and Buddhism and Jainism continued to enjoy popularity during his reign. Two records of Vāsudēva's reign are important for the history of Buddhism. The first one is his Mathurā image inscription[40] of the year 67. It records the erection of an image of Śākyamuni for the acceptance of the Mahāsaṅghika teachers. The other record[41] of the year 77, also from Mathurā, records the gift of the monk Jivaka of Uḍiyana at the *Vihāra* of *Dēvaputra* Huvishka. This monk seems to be the same as the one who made a similar gift at Huvishka's monastery in the year 47.

These are the epigraphical references wherein the Kushāṇa kings are involved. There are a large number of epigraphs which belong to the Kushāṇa period and which record pious dedications of people as their humble service to Buddhism. Thus, the epigraphs of the Kushāṇa period corroborate the facts furnished by non-epigraphical sources about the great service rendered by the Kushāṇa rulers for the cause of Buddhism.

With the ascendancy of the Imperial Guptas in North India, in the wake of the revival of Brahmanical religion, the vigour and splendour of Buddhism began to diminish, and we come out of the overwhelming world of the Buddha, the *Bōdhisattvas* and the *Bhikshus* to see the radiant faces of Vishṇu, Śiva, the Sun-god and other Brahmanical divinities. Nevertheless Buddhism continued to wield its influence on the minds of a section of the population, partly due to its inherent vitality and partly to the sympathetic attitude of the Gupta rulers towards it.

None of Samudragupta's epigraphs or coins is Buddhistic in nature, thus making it difficult to know his attitude towards Buddhism. But, fortunately, we learn from a Chinese tradition that king Mēghavarṇa of Ceylon (*c.* 352-79 A.D.) built a splendid monastery to the north of the Bōdhi tree at Bōdh-Gayā, with the permission of Samudragupta[42].

The Sāñchi stone inscription[43] of Chandragupta II, son of Samudragupta, dated in 412-13 A.D. states that there was a great *Vihāra* at Kākanādabōṭa (Sāñchi), where an official of this emperor, named Āmrakārdava, made an endowment of twentyfive *dināras*, the interest on which was to be used in providing for the maintenance of five *bhikshus* and burning a lamp in the *ratnagriha*.

The Chinese traveller Fa-hien, who visited India during the reign of Chandragupta II, gives a detailed account of the state of Buddhism in northern India between 399-414 A.D. He observes that Buddhism flourished at Gāndhāra, where the people were mostly students of the Hīnayāna school[44]; there were more than seven hundred monks at Purushapura (Peshawar), where there was a great *stūpa*[45]; and, at Mathurā, there were twenty monasteries containing three thousand monks[46].

These are only a few glimpses of the picturesque account of the Chinese traveller which leaves one with an impression that Buddhism was in a flourishing state in North India during his visit, even after leaving some margin for exaggeration.

The Mankuwār stone image inscription[47] of the time of Kumāragupta I, dated in 448-49 A.D., records that the *bhikshu* Buddhamitra installed an image of Buddha. The Sāñchi stone inscription[48] ascribed to the reign either of Kumāragupta or of his son and successor Skandagupta, dated in 450-51 A.D., refers to the great *stūpa* at Sāñchi. It relates how the *upāsikā* Harisvāminī, for the sake of her parents, gave twelve *dināras* as a permanent endowment to the community of the faithful at the great *vihāra* of Kākanādabōṭa. The interest accruing from this sum was to be utilized for feeding one *bhikshu*, introduced into the community. She also gave three *dināras* to the *ratna-griha* and one in the place where the images of four Buddhas were seated *(chatur-Buddhāsana)*.

Like Sāñchi, Mathurā also must have continued as a centre of Buddhism. The Mathurā stone inscription[49], probably issued during the reign of Skandagupta, and dated in 454-55 A.D., records the gift of a statue by the *Vihārasvāminī* Dēvatā. Sārnāth was another such centre. The Sārnāth stone inscription[50] of Kumāragupta II, dated in 473-74 A.D., records the setting up of an image of the Teacher (Buddha) by the monk Abhayamitra,

and two other stone inscriptions[51] from the same place, referring to the reign of Budhagupta, and dated in the Gupta year 157, record the installation of the images of the Buddha by the same donor.

From these references it becomes clear that, howsoever enthusiastic the Gupta emperors might have been to revive the Brahmanical religion, they were never intolerant towards Buddhism.

Not only the Imperial Gupta kings but some of their feudatories and contemporaries also were supporters of Buddhism. Thus, the Kura inscription of Tōramāna Shāha Javuvla, assigned to the Gupta period on the basis of its palaeography, records the construction of a Buddhist monastery by one Roṭa-Siddhavṛiddhi, the son of Roṭta-Jayavṛiddhi, for the teachers of the Mahīśāsaka school[52]. The Bihar Kotra inscription[53] of the Aulikara king Naravarman, dated in 417-18 A.D., records the digging of a reservoir for serving the needs of the itinerant members of the *bhikshu-saṃgha*. It is interesting to note that another inscription[54] of the same ruler has been discovered from a cave shelter in the outskirts of the same village of Bihar Kotra. Further, this inscription is dated in the same year as the previous one and records the excavation of the cave for the itinerant *saṃgha* members by Saṁghila, the disciple of *āchārya* Bhadantadāsa.

The Mandasōr inscription[55] of king Prabhākara, who is described as a menace to the enemies of the Guptas, records that his 'Commander of the forces' constructed a *stūpa*, a well, a charitable water-stall and a garden or monastery (*ārāma*). The first verse of this record eulogises Sugata. Lastly, the Kōsam inscription[56] of the reign of *Mahārāja* Vaiśravaṇa records the establishment of an umbrella in honour of the Lord Buddha by a merchant.

These are epigraphs which refer to the reign of different rulers. But there are many more which do not have such references. Of these we may mention a few important ones. The Mathurā image inscription[57] of 549-50 A.D. records the gift of an image of Buddha to the Yaśōvihāra by a Śākya female worshipper named Jayabhaṭṭā. The Sārnāth stone inscription[58] of the 5th century A.D. records the erection of a Buddhist image by *bhikshu* Harigupta. The Bōdh-Gayā stone image inscription[59] in Gupta Brāhmī characters records the construction of a Buddhist temple by the monk Bōdhisēna. The Bōdh-Gayā inscription[60] of Mahānāman dated in the [Gupta] year 268, states that this monk, who was a disciple of Upasēna, was born in the island of Lanka and was an inhabitant of Āmradvīpa. It further records the construction of a mansion for the Teacher of Mankind (the Buddha) by this monk. Another inscription[61] from the same place records the presentation of a Buddhist image by the same monk. Yet another epigraph[62] from this place, assigned to the 6th century A.D., records the gift of a Buddhist image by two Śākya mendicants. The Nālandā brick inscriptions[63], belonging to the 6th century A.D., furnish the text of the *Nidāna-sūtra*.

These references show that Mathurā, Sārnāth and Bōdh-Gayā were important Buddhist centres during the Gupta period.

What becomes evident from all the above references is the fact that Buddhism could flourish with its head raised, face to face with the revival of the Brahmanical religion that was the order of the day during the Gupta period. This was possible on account of the strength which Buddhism had gained under Aśoka and the Kushāṇa rulers and also the liberal attitude of the Gupta rulers towards it.

Of the post-Gupta period, the Maitrakas of Valabhi were great patrons of Buddhism. From the titles *Paramamāhēśvara* and *Paramabhāgavata* borne by these rulers it is clear that none of them adopted Buddhism as his personal religion. However, in one of his grants Guhasēna adopts the Buddhist style of *Paramōpāsaka*. As suggested by Virji[64], this was done by Guhasēna with an intention to please his cousin Duḍḍā, a Buddhist nun, for whom he had the highest esteem, and also the learned and virtuous Buddhist monks, who were his contemporaries. In his other records and those of his successors Guhasēna is called *Paramamāhēśvara* which clearly indicates that he was an ardent worshipper of Śiva. In our chapter on education we have stated how as many as fourteen different *Vihāras* figure in the charters of the different Maitraka kings and how Buddhist education was patronised by these rulers. According to Hiuen-Tsang[65] the Valabhi (country) "had above 100 Buddhist monasteries with 6,000 Brethren adherents of the Hinayāna Sammatiya school." Thus, the splendour of Buddhism was revived to some extent under the auspices of the Maitraka rulers who were not mere sympathisers like the Guptas, but active promoters of Buddhism.

Though the Imperial Maukharis were the followers of the Brahmanical religion as suggested by the Asirgarh seal[66] wherein the founder of this dynasty, *Mahārāja* Harivarman is compared to lord Vishṇu *(Chakradhara)* and *Mahārājādhirāja* Śarvavarman is styled *Paramamāhēśvara*, they seem to have patronised the famous Nālandā monastery as indicated by the discovery of the seals of Śarvavarman and Avantivarman and the latter's son, at Nālandā[67].

As against the liberal and tolerant religious policy of the rulers so far referred to, the Gauḍa king Śaśāṅka seems to have been full of hatred towards Buddhism. This is made known to us by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen- Tsang. Allan[68] quotes certain wicked deeds of Śaśāṅka intended to persecute Buddhism and adds at the end : "It is certain, then, that Śaśāṅka was a persecutor of Buddhism, although the Chinese pilgrim may credit him with more than he deserves." Thus, after Pushyamitra Śuṅga, whom certain Buddhist traditions call a cruel persecutor of Buddhism, we meet a second such enemy of Buddhism in Śaśāṅka. In the case of the former the erection of the Bhārhut *stūpa* and the gateway railings of the Sāñchi *stūpas* go against the Buddhist tradition as explained earlier, but in the case of the latter there seems to be no evidence to counter the allegations made by the Chinese pilgrim. For, Śaśāṅka's coins bear the representation of the god Śiva and goddess Lakshmi[69], and his three copper-plate charters[70], discovered so far, also suggest that he favoured Brahmanical religion. However, it is to be noted that there is nothing in these records that would indicate any hostility towards the Buddhists.

Of this period, the Kailān copper-plate inscription[71] of Śrīdhāraṇarāta (*c.* 665-75 A.D.) records grant of some land jointly to the Buddhists and Brāhmaṇas. Likewise, the Ashrafpur copper- plate inscription[72] of Dēvakhaḍga (*c.* 670-85 A.D.) records grant of land in favour of the Buddhist monastery built by the monk Saṅghamitra. These two records show that even some of the minor rulers of the post-Gupta period encouraged Buddhism.

Of all the rulers of the post-Gupta period Harsha was the greatest supporter of Buddhism. Though Hiuen- Tsang describes in detail the various measures adopted by Harsha for promoting Buddhism, his two copper-plate charters and his Nālandā sealing extoll him as a 'devout worshipper of Śiva and full of sympathy for all beings' *(paramamāhēśvaraḥ Mahēśvara iva sarvva-satv-ānukampakaḥ)*, and both the Sōnpat copper-seal and the Nālandā sealing bear, as device, the figure of a bull. These evidences show beyond doubt that Harsha was a Śaiva by faith. In the face of such clear evidence it is hard to accept literally what all the Chinese pilgrim likes us to believe. For, he would leave the impression that Harsha was not only a devoted follower of Buddhist religion, but even deliberately treated with scant respect the other religious sects, including Śaivas, as being distinctly inferior[73]. Hiuen- Tsang's account pertaining to Harsha's attitude towards Buddhism seems to be highly exaggerated and, perhaps, far from truth. Majumdar[74] critically examines this account and remarks at the end: "Hiuen-Tsang's account leaves no doubt that Harsha was greatly attached to Buddhism, and showed great honours upon the Chinese pilgrim for his learning, piety and devotion. But we should, perhaps, give too much credence to it if we believe that he formally gave up his old faith, and his zeal for Buddhism and respect and reverence for Hiuen- Tsang led him to show scant courtesy, if not disrespect, to other religious sects and their revered leaders". This remark deserves our serious attention, for an emperor like Harsha, who must have known the ideal religious policy of the great Guptas and the Maitrakas, if not that of Aśoka, could not have behaved in such a biased manner as described by the Chinese pilgrim.

Buddhism seems to have been born with germs of schism in its womb. For, we learn that during the life time of Gautama Buddha himself certain monks did not accept his leadership or obey his instructions fully, and within a century after the death of Buddha, during the second Council, the Buddhist church was divided into two main schools, *viz.* the Sthaviravādins and the Mahāsāṅghikas which subsequently proliferated into several sects and sub-sects. As remarked by Goyal[75], by the 7th century A.D. Buddhism was no longer one system; it had become a family of several schools and communities. This was one of the factors that led to the decline of Buddhism.

Some of these schools and sects of Buddhism are met with in the epigraphs of the period under study. Divergent opinions are held by scholars regarding the third Buddhist Council having been held under the auspices of the Mauryan emperor Aśoka.[76] But, undoubtedly, the Buddhist church was facing serious threat of the schismatic elements in the days of Aśoka. This is clearly indicated by the strong

wording of the Kauśāmbī, Sāñchī and Sārnāth pillar-edicts, wherein Aśoka orders heretical monks and nuns to be expelled from the Saṁgha, as noted earlier in this chapter (see p. 175). Aśokan inscriptions themselves do not mention any of the Buddhist sects, nor do the epigraphs on the Sāñchī and Bhārhut stūpas refer to them.

In the post-Mauryan period we come across the following epigraphical references to different Buddhist schools and sects.

(1) The Bedadi copper-ladle inscription[77], palaeographically assigned to the pre-Kushāṇa period, records the gift of Saṁgharakshita to the congregation of the Kāśyapīya teachers from the four quarters, in the Uraśā kingdom.

(2) The Mathurā Lion Capital inscriptions[78] of the time of Rājuvula and Śōḍāsa, assigned to the 1st century A.D.,[79] depict the Sarvāstivādins and the Mahāsāṅghikas as two rival sects.

(3) The Shāh-jī-kī-Ḍherī casket inscription[80] of the reign of Kanishka I records a religious gift made to the Sarvāstivādin teachers.

(4) The Zeda inscription[81] of the reign of the same king records a gift made for the increase of the Sarvāstivāda.

(5) The Kurram Casket inscription[82] of the year 20 records the establishment of a relic of the Lord Śākyamuni for the Sarvāstivāda teachers.

(6) The Wardak Vase inscription[83] of the year 51, referring to the reign of Huvishka, states that the Vagramarega-Vihāra was erected for the Mahāsāṅghika teachers.

(7) The Set-Mahet image inscription[84] of the time of Kanishka or Huvishka records the gift of a Bōdhisattva image which is stated to be the property of the Sarvāstivādin teachers.

(8) The Mathurā stone channel inscription[85] of the year 91 records some erection (most probably the channel itself) for the increase of the religious merit and strength of the Mahāsāṅghikas.

(9) The Mathurā stone slab inscription[86] belonging to the Kushāṇa period records the dedication of an image of Bōdhisattva for the acceptance of the Samitīya teachers.

(10) The Tor Ḍherai potsherds inscription[87] of *c.* 200 A.D. records the making of a religious gift for the Sarvāstivādin teachers.

(11) The Palāṭū Ḍherī jar inscription[88] of a comparatively later period refers to the Bahuśrutīyaka and Kāśyapīya *śramaṇas*.

(12) Lastly, we may refer to a clay seal[89] unearthed during excavations at Sankisa, bearing, in Kushāṇa characters, the legend *Ayana Haimavatana* (*Skt. Āryāṇāṁ Haimavatānām*).

We have quoted these references as they are of vital importance in deciding the antiquity of the various Buddhist sects. Epigraphs are a better and more reliable source than the literary sources which often contradict each other and imperil the very historicity of certain important incidents. This is specially applicable to the history of Buddhism which is based on mutually conflicting literary traditions called Northern, Southern, Indian, Ceylonese, Tibetan, Chinese, etc. What is relevant here is that the above references show that the Buddhist church had divided into several sects and sub-sects by the beginning of the Christian era or even earlier.

From the epigraphs quoted above and a few others we come to know of the actual existence of some of the sects and sub-sects of Buddhism. The existence of the two important schools of Buddhism *viz.*, the Sarvāstivādins and the Mahāsāṅghikas is noticed in the Brāhmī and Kharōshṭhī records of the post-Mauryan period. The Mathurā Lion capital inscription is the earliest to mention these schools. The rivalry between these two schools is also proved by this inscription. The earliest Kushāṇa record that refers to the Sarvāstivādins is the Kalawān inscription[90] of the year 13. This record, together with some of those quoted above, clearly indicates that the Kushāṇa rulers were in favour of Sarvāstivāda and Mathurā was an important centre of this school. From the Kharōshṭhī inscriptions of the north-western region, which have been quoted above, Afghanistan seems to have been the stronghold of the Mahāsāṅghikas. But they were equally powerful at Mathurā as evidenced from the Mathurā Lion Capital and the stone image inscriptions mentioned above and certain other inscriptions[91].

The Haimavatas, like the Sarvāstivādins, were a sub-sect of the Sthaviravādin school[92]. We have already mentioned a seal of the Haimavatas bearing a legend in Kushāṇa characters. But even earlier two relic casket inscriptions[93] from the Sāñchī *stūpa* No. II refer to the Haimavatas, one of them referring to the members of the community of the Haimavatas. As suggested by its name this sect seems to have originated in the Himalayan region.

The Dharmaguptikas who were closely allied to the Sarvāstivādins, are referred to in a solitary Prakrit record[94].

The Kāśyapīyas, also known as the Suvarshakas, were a sub-sect of the Sthaviravādins[95]. The former figure in two of the Kharōshṭhī records quoted above, of which the Bedadi ladle inscription belongs to a pre-Kushāṇa period and the Pālāṭū Ḍherī Jar inscription is of a later period. Of the earlier period (2nd-1st century B.C.), the Pabhōsā cave inscription[96] of Āshāḍhasēna seems to refer to the Kāśyapīya *arhats*.

The Samitīyas or the Sammitīyas, who were allied to the Vātsīputrīya sect of the Sthaviravādin school[97], are referred to in an inscription[98] of the Kushāṇa period from Mathurā.

Lastly, the Bahuśrutīyas who were a later branch of the Mahāsāṅghika school[99] are mentioned in the Pālāṭū Ḍherī Jar inscription referred to above. It is strange to note that

both the Kāśyapīyas, who are a sub-sect of the Sthaviravādin school, and the Bahuśrutīyas, a later branch of the Mahāsāṅghika school as already noted, are mentioned together as the joint recipients of the gift (of the jar) in this inscription. We have seen earlier how the Sarvāstivādins and the Mahāsāṅghikas are depicted as rivals in an inscription. In this connection Konow[100] thus quotes Tārānāth : " According to Tārānāth the Sarvāstivādins reckoned the Bahuśrutīyas, who are elsewhere mentioned as belonging to the Mahāsāṅghikas, as one of their own sub-schools, as was also the case with the Kāśyapīyas." This mention of two sub-sects, each individually allied to two rival schools, as joint recipients of a gift, perhaps, suggests an attempt at achieving unity of two rival sub-sects, either by the members of the sub-sects themselves or by the donor, if we are not to think that the mutiplicity of the sects and sub-sects had reached a stage where proper identification of the sub-sects with their sects or schools had become difficult, even in such an early period.

This epigraphical account of the various schools, sects and sub- sects makes it clear that it was the Sarvāstivādin school that held sway in North India during the post-Mauryan period, for while we come across epigraphical references to the Sarvāstivādin school and five of its sects and sub-sects, we get such reference to the Mahāsāṅghika school and to only one of its later branches, *viz.*, the Bahuśrutīyas.

Very little information about the Buddhist schools and sects is traceable from the epigraphs of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods. A single line inscription on the Aśokan pillar at Sārnāth, palaeographically assigned to the 4th century A.D., mentions the Vātsīputrika school and the Sammitīya sect.[101] Vogel makes a very important comment on this record. He writes: " If the proposed reading be correct it would afford an interesting proof of the correctness of a Tibetan tradition, according to which the Vātsīputrīyas were a subdivision of the Sammitīya sect. As stated by Hiuen Tsang the large convent which once stood at Sārnāth accommodated fifteen hundred monks of this sect." But according to Banerjee's chart[102] the Sammitīyas were a subdivision of the Vātsīputrīya sect. In this connection we would like to point out that the Sārnāth inscription under discussion, reading *Ā[chā]ryyaṇaṁ sa[mmi]ttiyānaṁ parigraha Vātsīputrikānaṁ*, does not furnish a clue as to which one of the two sects, *viz.*, the Vātsīputrīya and the Sammitīya, originated from the other. But the fact that these two sects were allied to each other becomes certain on the evidence of this epigraph.

The Kura copper-plate inscription[103] of Tōramāṇa Shāha, palaeographically assigned to the 4th-5th century A.D., records the construction of a monastery for the teachers of the Mahīśāsaka school. The Mahīśāsakas formed one of the five branches of the Sarvāstivāda school[104].

The Shōrkōṭ (in the Panjab) copper-cauldron inscription[105], dated in 403 A.D., records the dedication of this engraved object to the Sarvāstivādi *bhikshu-saṁgha*. Earlier we have noted how Sarvāstivāda was prevailing in the north-western parts of India during

the post-Mauryan period, as attested to by the Kharōshṭhī inscriptions. The present epigraph shows that the Sarvāstivādins continued to hold sway over their north-western abode during the Gupta period too.

The Mandasōr inscription[106] of Prabhākara, dated in 467 A.D. records that a *stūpa*, a *prapā* and an *ārāma*, which were erected by this king, were included within the bounds of the *Vihāra* of the Lōkōttaras (*lōkōnta(tta)ra-vihārasya sīmni tē= bhyantarīkṛitā*, Text, l.15). As suggested by Garde[107] the term *Lōkōttara* occurring here was the proper name of a local monastery of the Lōkōttaravādin sect of the Hīnayāna form of Buddhism.

Lastly, a copper-plate grant[108] of Dharasēna IV refers to the Mahāyāna monks as staying in the Yodhāvaka monastery, to which certain gifts were made.

It is generally held that the first great split in the Buddhist church and its fundamental doctrines occurred during the session of the Fourth Buddhist Council held under the auspices of the Kushāṇa king Kanishka, and by the beginning of the Christian era Mahāyānism had assumed its definite shape[109]. So far as inscriptions are concerned they clearly establish that Mahāyānism was well established by the beginning of the Kushāṇa period. The plurality of the Buddhas and their divinity, the ideals of Bōdhisattva and the worship of the Buddhas, Bōdhisattvas and other gods and goddesses may be considered the *sine qua non* of Mahāyānism[110]. Now, the epigraphs of the Kushāṇa period refer to dedication of numerous images of the Buddha and Bōdhisattvas which were installed in various *Vihāras* and worshipped. In fact, the two great sculptural schools of the Kushāṇa period, *viz.*, of Mathurā and Gāndhāra, owe their origin to the rise of Mahāyānism. Further, we find clear references to the plurality of the Buddhas in Kushāṇa epigraphs. Thus, the Taxila inscription[111] of the year 136, which probably belongs to the reign of Vīma- Kadphises or Kujula-Kadphises[112], recording the enshrining of the relics of the Buddha in the Dharmarājika *stūpa*, mentions the Bōdhisattva chapel *(bosi(dhi)satva-gahami)*, all the Buddhas *(sarva- budhaṇa puyae)* and the individual Buddhas *(prach[e*]ga-budhaṇa puyae)*. The Mathurā stone slab inscription of the Kushāṇa period, recording the installation of an image of a Bōdhisattva, states that the said dedication was made for the glorification of all the Buddhas *(sarva-Budha-pujāye)*. And above all, the Gōvindnagar inscription[113] of Huvishka's reign, dated in the year 25, records the installation of an image of Amitābha Buddha *(Bhagavato Buddhasya Amitābhasya)*, who is one of the five Dhyānī Buddhas of the Mahāyāna pantheon.

From these references it becomes evident that Mahāyānism was a fully developed school of Buddhism by the time of the beginning of the Kushāṇa rule which synchronises with the beginning of the Christian era. Therefore, it is logical to hold that this school must have evolved not later than the 1st century B.C.

Of the subsequent period, the Sāñchī stone inscription[114] of 450- 51 A.D., recording certain grants to the *Ārya-saṁgha* at the great *Vihāra*, refers to the place where there were four seated images of the Buddhas *(chatur-Buddh-āsane)*, and two fragmentary charters[115]

of the Maitraka king Dharasēna IV record the grant of a village and some land for the purpose of providing for worship and offerings to the Buddhist deity Tārādēvi. Tārā was the most popular goddess of the Mahāyāna pantheon. She was regarded as the personification of *prajñā*, and hence called Prajñāpāramitā[116]. It is quite interesting to note that these charters enumerate *pūjā, snapana, gandha, pushpa, dhūpa, dipa* and *taila*, as the various items of worship of Tārā. If we note that as many as five items of this list find mention in the list of 'the sixteen ways of doing homage to a Brahmanical deity' *(shōḍaś-ōpachāra)*[117], it can very well be understood how Buddhism was becoming subjected to the overwhelming influence of the Brahmanical religious system, or imitating the latter to maintain its popularity, lest it should loose ground.

Some inscriptions of the period under study throw light on the doctrines and literature of Buddhism. But such epigraphical references are few and far between. The Sārnāth umbrella inscription[118] of the 2nd-3rd century A.D. contains a short enumeration of the four *ariyasachchas*, the fundamental doctrines of the Buddha. These four truths form the essence of the famous Benares sermon, and it is significant that the present record comes from the place where the Buddha "turned the wheel of the law" *(Dharma-chakra-pravartana)*. The four noble truths enumerated in this record are: (1) suffering *(dukkham)*, (2) the cause of suffering *(dukkhasamudaya)*, (3) the suppression of suffering *(dukkhanirodho)* and (4) the path leading to suppression of suffering *(dukkhanirodha-gāminī cha paṭipadā)*. Another Buddhist inscription[119] of about the 4th century A.D. from Kara (Allahabad District, U.P.), opens with an assertion of the impermanent nature of an individual being *(nāma-rūpam=anityam)*.

Such an averment is quite in keeping with the Buddhist doctrine according to which the realization of the impermanent nature of all things leads to the attainment of right knowledge.

In the chapter on education we have quoted a list of religious texts as prescribed by Aśoka for all, and as enumerated in the Bhābhrū Edict. All these texts, except the *Vinaya-samukase*, pertain to the *Sutta-piṭaka*. This is a clear proof of the existence of the *Sutta-piṭaka* in the 3rd century B.C. Further, the epigraphs from the Sāñchi and Bhārhut *stūpas* attest to the existence of the *Sutta-piṭaka* with its five *nikāyas* in the 2nd century B.C. Thus, an inscription[120] on Sāñchi *stūpa* No. I and another on the Bhārhut *stūpa*[121] style two Buddhist monks as *pamchanekayika*. This term means 'one who knows the five *Nikāyas*'. The five *Nikāyas* intended here must be the five divisions *(Digha, Majjhima*, etc.) of the *Sutta-piṭaka* in the Pāli canon, for only here the division into five *Nikāyas* occur. In the canon of the other schools the term *āgama* is used instead of *nikāya*[122].

The *Pratītya-samutpāda* or *Nidāna-Sūtra*, which the Lord Buddha revealed soon after his enlightenment under the Bōdhi tree at Bōdh-Gayā, is an all important *sūtra* occurring in many Pāli and Sanskrit Buddhist texts[123]. This *sūtra* adverting the 'Conditionally coproducedness' *(pratītya-samutpanna)* of things, is the basic Buddhist doctrine,

recognised and taught first by the Buddha and his immediate disciples and thereafter throughout the whole course of Buddhist history[124]. The text of this *sūtra* is contained in the epigraphs from Nālandā and other places. The earliest epigraph containing this *sūtra* is the Kurram casket inscription[125] of the Kushāṇa period. It contains only the positive arrangements of the *sūtra* and is termed *Paṭichasamupade* (*Skt. Pratītya-samutpāda*). Then, the Gōpālpur brick inscriptions and the Kasiā copper-plate inscription, contain this *sūtra*. These records are in Gupta characters and Sanskrit language. The text of the *sūtra* in question as given in these records is on the whole identical and contains the positive and the negative arrangements of the 'Propositions of the Theory of Causes', technically termed as *āchaya* (i.e. collection) and *apachaya* (the loss) of Dharma[126]. The Nālandā brick inscription[127] of 516-17 A.D. contains the same text of the *sūtra* as in the Gōpālpur and Kasiā inscriptions mentioned above. But the two undated brick inscriptions[128] of the Gupta period from Nālandā contain the positive arrangements of the *sūtra* and also a *Vibhanga* or division which is not met with in other records so far discovered. On an analysis of these epigraphical occurrences of the *Pratītya-samutpāda-sūtra* and early literary reference to it, Bagchi[129] holds that the (Buddhist) Āgamas were still in the process of formation even shortly before the time of Vasubandhu (5th century A.D.).

Before concluding this section we may note here two interesting facts revealed from the epigraphs. The Kalawān copper-plate inscription[130] of the 1st century A.D. records the putting up of relics in a 'house-stūpa' *(gṛiha-stūpa)* at Chhaḍaśila by a female worshipper. Konow[131] thus explains the word *gṛiha-stūpa* : "The term *gahathuba* (*Skt. gṛihastūpa)* is new, but evidently means *stūpa* standing in a *gṛiha*, i.e., a roofed building. For we have already seen that our *stūpa* was situated within a chapel that had been roofed over." The Utmanzai lamp inscription in Kharōshṭhi characters[131A] mentions a *grāma-stūpa*. From the first reference it becomes clear that in the post-Mauryan period *stūpas* were built either inside a roofed building or in an open space, and the second one leads us to believe that *stūpas* were known by such terms as *grāma-stūpa* depending on their situation in a village *(grāma)*, town or city.

A Buddhist inscription[132] of the 1st century A.D. from Kōsam records the making and installation of a stone at the residence of the Buddha *(Budhāvāsa)* in the Ghōshit-ārāma. Ghōshit-ārāma was a well-known Buddhist establishment at Kauśāmbi, where the Buddha is stated to have stayed on many occasions. It may be noted here that another Kōsam inscription[133] of the reign of Kanishka, the exact findspot of which is unknown, refers to the promenade *(chaṁkama)* of the Buddha. Considering these two inscriptions and the literary references to the Ghōshit-ārāma, Ghosh[134] writes: "All these tend to show that the Buddha's visit to and stay at Kauśāmbi may not, after all, have been a myth, as has sometimes been thought. In any case, this inscription, together with a few others subsequently found in the excavation of the same area, proves that, at least in the first century A.D., the Buddhist establishment, the ruins of which have now been

laid bare by excavation, was known as the Ghoshit-ārāma and, besides, contained a spot believed to have been the Buddha's residence."

Jainism

The origins of Jainism have been traced back to pre-historic times. The Jaina tradition speaks of twenty-four *Tirthankaras* each of whom preached the doctorine in his own times. Of these, Pārśva, the twenty-third and Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth *Tirthankaras* are considered historical personalities. So far as the epigraphical sources are concerned the antiquity of Jainism can be traced back to the pre-Mauryan period. In line 12 of the Hāthigumphā cave inscription we are told that Khāravela, in the twelfth year of his reign, attacked Magadha, made its king Bahasatimitra bow at his feet and carried away and set up in Kaliṅga the image of Jina which was earlier taken away from Kaliṅga by king Nanda of Pāṭaliputra (4th century B.C.). This episode of the Jaina image as narrated in the Hāthigumphā inscription shows that as early as the 4th century B.C. Jainism prevailed in Kaliṅga. We also come to know that the Nanda invader who carried away the Jaina image was interested in the Jaina faith, for had he been averse to this faith he would have simply destroyed the image like a fanatic. That the Nandas supported Jainism is further supported by literary tradition according to which this dynasty had a line of Jaina ministers beginning with Kalpaka[135].

From a Jaina tradition we come to know that Chandragupta Maurya joined the Jaina order as a monk. The same tradition speaks of a serious famine during Chandragupta's reign which led to the migration of the Jaina monks including Chandragupta from the Magadhan country to the south[136]. It is quite interesting to note that this account of drought in the region of Magadha during the Mauryan period finds a corroborative evidence in the Mahāsthān and Sohgaurā inscriptions which we have discussed in the chapter on social conditions. Here it is enough to state that both these records belong to the Mauryan period and refer to some arrangements made by the state for helping the famine-stricken people.

Nothing is known from the Aśokan Edicts about the state of Jainism under this emperor. P.E. VII[137] is the only record of this ruler which refers to the Jaina sect. In this inscription the Jaina monks are referred to as *Nigaṃṭhas* (*Skt. Nirgranthas*) and they figure along with the Buddhists, Brāhmaṇas and Ājivikas, with all of whom the *Dharmamahāmātras* were ordered to be engaged. This clearly indicates that Jainism was considered an important religious sect in the Aśokan empire. Further, in the light of Aśoka's policy of tolerance towards all religious systems, as depicted in R.E. XII[138], it may be safely held that Jainism had an honourable existence in the days of Aśoka.

A noteworthy point about the history of Jainism is the fact that the migration of the Jaina monks towards the south as stated in the Jain traditions finds confirmation in the inscriptions from Orissa and Mathurā. One early migration led the Jaina monks to Kaliṅga as is evident from the famous Hāthigumphā inscription[139] of Khāravela, the

Mañchapurī inscription[140] of his queen and the numerous caves dedicated probably to the Jaina monks on the Udayagiri and Khaṇḍagiri hills[141].

The Hāthigumphā inscription of Khāravela is an important record for the early history of Jainism. As already noted it attests to the prevalence of Jainism in Orissa in the pre-Mauryan period by its reference to the image of the Kaliṅga-Jina which had been carried away by a Nanda ruler. There is some controversy about the date of Khāravela. Some scholars think that he lived in the 2nd century B.C. whereas others assign him to the 1st century B.C.[142] But this fact does not militate against the view that Jainism prevailed in Kaliṅga in the post-Mauryan period under the able support of Khāravela.

The Hāthigumphā inscription is a record of the heroism of Khāravela on the one hand, and that of his yeoman service to Jainism on the other. This record opens with the obeisance to the *arahaṁtas* and the *siddhas*. The term *arahaṁta* has been explained in line 14 as "those who have cast off transmigration (*pakhiṇa-saṁsitehi= Skt. prakshipta-saṁsritāh*)[143]. Khārvela is stated to have convened a Council of Jaiṇa monks. According to Shashi Kant[144] the object of the Council was apparently to collect and preserve the twelve *Aṅgas* (the principal scripture of Jainism) which had been gradually declining in volume. We have earlier noted that another meritorious act on the part of Khāravela was to recover the image of Kaliṅga-Jina which is a clear proof of the prevalence of idol worship among the Jainas of Kaliṅga even at such an early date.

In the thirteenth year of his reign Khāravela is stated to have respectfully offered royal maintenance, China clothes (silk) and white clothes to the members of the Yāpanīya-saṁgha at the relic memorial *(Kāya-Nishīdī)* on the Kumārī Hill. This clearly shows that there were, on the Udayagiri hills, *Kāya Nishīdīs* (relic memorials) from before Khāravela's time. Another interesting point here is the mention of the Yāpanīya-saṁgha which flourished in the south. This *saṁgha* is mentioned often in Jaina literature and medieval inscriptions of South India[145].

The Jaina literary traditions hold that Mahāvīra visited Kaliṅga and preached there. In this connection it is to be noted that Jayaswal and Banerji[146] think that the Kumārī Hill may be the site where he preached, as they are inclined to believe that the expression *Supavata-vijaya-chaka-Kumārīpavate* (on the Kumārī Hill where the wheel of law had been well revolved, *i.e.*, the religion of Jina had been preached) contains an allusion to that effect.

Lastly, line 14 of the Hāthigumphā inscription states that Khāravela as a layman was devoted to worship and that he realized the nature of *Jīva* and *Dēha* (*pūj-ānurata-uvās[aga-Khā]ravela-sirinā jīva- deha-[siri]kā parikhitā*). According to the Jaina philosophy there are two categories, the *jīva* (soul) and *ajīva* (non-soul). Soul is independent, with a separate entity altogether, and is not to be identified with the body (*dēha*), a form of matter (*pudgala* which is *ajīva*), in which it is contained for the time being[147]. Thus, it becomes

evident that Khāravela was deeply interested in both the practical and philosophical aspects of Jainism.

The Junāgadh inscription[148] of the grandson of Jayadāman, belonging to the 2nd century A.D., mentions men who had attained perfect knowledge *(kevali-jñāna)* and were free from old age and death *(jarā-maraṇa)*, words distinctly suggestive of Jaina dogma. This inscription is in a cave which appears to have been used by Jaina monks, as is indicated by the peculiar Jaina symbols like the *Svastika, Bhadrāsana, Mīnayugala* and others. Further, the caves found at Dhank, in which the sculptures of the Jaina prophets like Rishabha, Pārśva, Mahāvīra and others have been identified, may be assigned to the same period[149]. Thus, it seems that Jainism was well established in Gujarat by the early centuries of the Christian era.

One wave of migration of the Jaina monks moved towards Mathurā. This is attested to by several inscribed sculptural remains discovered in and around Mathurā. These inscriptions, recording the dedication of various Jaina images, pillars, slabs, etc., furnish a lot of material for the study of the state of Jainism in the post-Mauryan period. With the exception of one or two, all these epigraphs belong to the 2nd or 1st century A.D., some of them expressly referring to the Kshatrapa and Kushāṇa rulers.

The chief interest of these epigraphs lies in the fact that they furnish the names of the various *gaṇas, kulas, śākhās* and *sambhōgas*, into which the Jaina religious order was divided even at such an early period. A comparative study of these divisions as found in the inscriptions and as furnished in the Jaina literary tradition forms a separate subject by itself. The four terms, *gaṇa* and others mentioned above, refer to the groups of Jaina monks. They are mentioned in a decreasing order with reference to their sizes, the *gaṇa* being the largest and the *sambhōga*, the smallest. We furnish in the sequel the names of the *gaṇas* together with their *kulas, śākhas and sambhōgas* as found in the Mathurā inscriptions[150].

Of all the main divisions, the Koṭṭiya-gaṇa figures prominently in the inscriptions. Its *kulas* mentioned are, the Sthānīya-kula, the Brahmadāsika-kula, the Vātsalīya-kula and the Pa. vaha. ka-kula. The last mentioned kula, whose name is damaged in the epigraph, has been identified by Bühler with the Praśnavāhanaka-kula or Paṇhavāhaṇaya-kula of the Jaina tradition[151]. The *śākhās* associated with Koṭṭiya-gaṇa are, the Āryavajrī-śākhā of the Sthānīya-kula, Uchenāgarī-śākhā of the Brahmadāsika-kula and the Majhama-śākhā of the Praśnavāhanaka-kula. No *śākhā* of the Vātsalīya-kula is mentioned in the inscriptions. The two *sambhōgas* associated with this *gaṇa* are the Sṛigṛiha-sambhōga, the Śirika-sambhōga and the .ārina-sambhōga. Regarding the name of this last mentioned *sambhōga*, Bühler[152] suggests that *Śirikāto sambhogāto* may be the original reading.

Next comes the Vāraṇa-gaṇa with its numerous *kulas* and *śākhās*. As many as seven *kulas* of this *gaṇa* have been mentioned in the inscriptions. They are, the Nāḍikā-kula, the Petivamika-kula, the Ayyabhyisita-kula, the Ārya-Hāliya-kula, the Kaniyasika-kula, the

Ārya-Cheṭika-kula and the Pushyamitrīya-kula. The *śākhās* associated with this *gaṇa* are the Saṁkāsīya-śākhā, the Vārjanāgarī-śākhā, the Haritamālagaḍhī-śākhā and the Od... -śākhā. The two *sambhōgas* associated with this *gaṇa* are the same as in the case of the Koṭṭiya-gaṇa.

Then there is the Uddehikīya-gaṇa appearing in only two records. Its two *kulas, viz.* the Paridhasika-kula and the Ārya-Nāgabhuktikīya-kula, and the only *śākhā* called Petuputrika are also mentioned in these records. The [Me]hika-kula occurring in one of the inscriptions has been identified by Bühler with the Mehiya-kula of the Vesavādiya-gaṇa[153].

Equally important is the information furnished by the post-Mauryan Jaina inscriptions at Mathurā regarding the religious practices of the Jainas. They refer to the installation of a number of Jaina images for the purpose of worship. Earlier we have stated that the practice of image worship among the Jainas can be traced back to the period of the Nandas as evidenced in the Hāthigumphā inscription of Khāravela. The numerous inscribed sculptures at Mathurā bear testimony to the brisk activity of the Jaina community at this place. Besides images, the inscriptions refer to Jaina temples and *stūpas* that were erected at this place.

Among the images the largest number are those of Mahāvīra. As many as twelve inscriptions refer to the installation of this *Tīrthaṅkara* who is called Vardhamāna throughout with an exception[154]. This is indicative of the popularity of worship of this Jina. The first *Tīrthaṅkara* Rishabha is mentioned in three epigraphs. Śāntinātha, the sixteenth, Aranātha, the eighteenth, Arishṭanēmi (Nēminātha), the twentysecond and Pārśvanatha, the twenty third *Tīrthaṅkaras* are referred to in one inscription each. These references are to either the erection or installation of these different images. It is interesting to note that in one of the inscriptions[155] the term Nandyāvarta, which is the name of the special cognisance of the eighteenth Jina Aranātha, has itself been employed to denote this *Tīrthaṅkara (arahato Ṇandi[ā]vartasa pratimaṁ)*.

Sarasvati and Naigamesha are the other Jaina deities mentioned in the Mathurā inscriptions and represented in images. There is a class of sixteen divinities concerned with learning according to the Jaina tradition. This class is headed by Sarasvatī[156]. Two of the inscriptions record the installation of the image of Sarasvatī. Naigamesha is a god connected with the power of procreation in the Jaina tradition[157]. The inscription[158] engraved below the seated image of this god with a goat's head[159] reads : *bhagavā Nemeso bhaga..*

Four inscriptions record the erection of the *Sarvatōbhadra* images and the fifth one[160], which is damaged, must also have referred to a *Sarvatōbhadra* image as it is engraved on the base of such an image[161]. The expression *Sarvatōbhadrikā pratimā* literally means 'an image lovely on all sides'. It is apparently a technical term for a 'fourfold image, one being carved on each side of a four faced column'[162]. This kind of image seems to be a peculiarity of Jaina iconography, for normally such quadruple images of the Buddhist

deities are not known though Śivaliṅgas with four forms of Śiva or four divinities (Śiva, Sūrya, Vishṇu and Dēvī) are met with and also *Sarvatōbhadra-dēvālaya* is known to Hindu architecture[163]. Besides these, there are several inscriptions engraved on the pedestals of various Jina images the names of which are either not mentioned or not preserved.

Then, there are several inscriptions recording the installation of what is called an *Āyagapaṭa* which is thus explained by Bhattacharya: "It is an ornamental slab bearing the representation of Jina or of some other object of worship and the term may be appropriately rendered by 'tablet of homage or of worship', since such slabs were set up in temples as the numerous inscriptions on them say 'for the worship of the Arhats'[164]".

Two inscriptions[165] record the setting up of temple arches *(Toraṇa* or *Pāsādatoraṇa)*. Though these arches might have primarily served as architectural parts, on account of the divine images carved on them they too seem to have been considered pious objects of dedication.

Mathurā inscriptions clearly attest to the existence of at least one *stūpa* and several temples of the Jainas at that place. Thus, an inscription[166] of the early Kushāṇa period records the installation of a Jina at the Vodva-stūpa which was believed to have been built by gods *(Vodve thupe devanirmite)*. This reference clearly shows that the Jainas, like the Buddhists, built *stūpas* for the purpose of worship though we do not have living examples of them. As many as five inscriptions refer to the Jaina temples. Thus, an epigraph[167] records the setting up of an image of Mahāvīra in the temple of the Arhats *(arahatāyatana)* and the construction of a shrine *(devakula)*. Here there seems to be a clear distinction between a small shrine (*devakula*), containing probably a single image, and a bigger temple *(āyatana)* consisting of more than one image, both of which were erected at Mathurā as evidenced in this epigraph. Another inscription[168] records the construction of a shrine *(devakula)* and a temple *(āyatana)* for the Arhats. A third inscription[169] refers to the setting up of *āyagapaṭas* in a temple. Though the word denoting the place where the *āyagapaṭas* were set up is spelt as *bhamdira* the present context makes it clear that the first consonant of this word is a mistake for *ma*. Thus, we get another word *(mandira)* for a Jaina temple of the post-Mauryan period. A fourth inscription[170] records the gift of an arch for a temple *(pāsādatōraṇaṁ)*, and a fifth inscription,[171] that of a temple *(pāsāda)* itself. Thus, a temple was also called *prāsāda*. These various terms denoting a temple and a shrine suggest that several Jaina temples were built at Mathurā.

There are yet one or two interesting points revealed by these inscriptions at Mathurā. One of these inscriptions has been rightly assigned to the middle of the 2nd century B.C. by Bühler[172] who points out its archaic characters which are comparable with those of the Aśokan edicts and look older than Dhanabhūti's inscription at Bhārhut, and the Prakrit language of the Pāli type. Then, two of these Jaina inscriptions refer to the Kshatrapa rulers who must have ruled at Mathurā before its occupation by the Kushāṇas[173]. Lastly, according to another inscription of the Kushāṇa period, an ancient

Jaina *stūpa* existed in Mathurā, which even in that period was considered to have been built by gods, *i.e.*, was so ancient that its real origin had been completely forgotten[174]. These instances prove beyond doubt that Jainism had gained strong support at Mathurā right from the beginning of the post-Mauryan period.

Lüders[175] holds that the donors figuring in the Lucknow Museum inscription (originally found at Mathurā) of an unnamed *Mahārāja Rājātirāja*, dated in the year 292, were of foreign origin. This inscription opens with an adoration to all *Siddhas* and the *Arhats* and records the setting up of an image of Mahāvīra by Okhārikā, her daughter Ujhatikā and Okhā, the lay-sister. This insciption has been assigned to the pre-Kanishka period. The name Okhārikā., in its variant form Okharikā, is found again in a Jaina inscription from Mathurā. Here this lady is stated to be the daughter of Damitra (Dimitra according to Lüders). This second inscription belongs to the Kushāṇa period according to Lüders. Now Lüders holds that all these names, *viz.*, Okharikā, Okhā, Dimitra and Ujhatikā, are those of the Greeks, and identifies the first three with their Greek proto types, Eucharia, Euche and Demetrios respectively. From this it becomes evident that some of the foreigners who were settled in North India, during its alien rule in the post-Mauryan period, accepted Jainism as their personal religion and dedicated Jina images like the Indian devotees of this religion.

Lastly, it is well known that austerities are an essential part of the Jaina religious practices. One of the Mathurā inscriptions[176] of the Kushāṇa period, recording the gift of a lady named Vijayaśrī, states that she had fasted for a month *(masopavasini= Skt. māsōpavāsinī)*. It is to be noted that she was not quite young when she observed this painful vow of fasting, for she is stated to have been the grand mother *(pidamahi=Skt. pitāmahī)* of Vishṇubhava. This instance indicates that the followers of Jainism at Mathurā were not content with mere dedications of temples, images, etc., but they sincerely practised the vows of austerity as laid down in the Jaina tradition.

The age of Gupta imperialism which marked a revival of Brahmanism, proved to be a period of decline for both Jainism and Buddhism. This is borne out by the scarcity of epigraphical as well as literary records about Jainism in this period. Further, it is to be noted that Fa-hien makes no reference to Jainism. However, Jainism, like Buddhism, continued to have its hold over a relatively small section of the society, as evidenced by a few epigraphs of this period.

Mathurā continued to be a Jaina centre during this period. The Mathurā image inscription[177] of Kumāragupta I, dated in 426-27 A.D., records the putting up of an image of *Jina* by a lady named Śāmāḍhyā, at the behest of Dattilāchārya of the Vidyādharī-śākhā of the Kōṭṭiya-gaṇa. We have earlier noted that this *gaṇa* is referred to predominantly in the Jaina inscriptions of the post-Mauryan period from Mathurā. But, however, the Vidyādharī-śākhā, which must have originated in the post-Kushāṇa period, has not been mentioned in pre-Gupta inscriptions.

The Kahāum (Gorakhpur District, U.P.) stone pillar inscription[178] of Skandagupta, dated in 459-60 A.D., attests to the prevalence of Jainism in the Gorakhpur District of U.P. It records that a certain Madra set up five stone images of *Ādikartris* or *Tirthaṅkaras*, *i.e.*, apparently the five images in the niches of the inscribed column, and the column itself, at the village of Kakubha, *i.e.*, Kahāum.

From its description as 'Jewel of a village' *(grāma-ratnē)* and as 'purified by the intercourse of holy men' *(sādhu-samsarga-pūtē)*, it appears that the village of Kahāum was a fairly well known Jaina centre inhabited or often visited by Jaina saints in the Gupta period. Considering the names of the father and grandfather of the donor of this record, *viz.*, Rudrasōma and Bhaṭṭisōma, which are typical Brahmanical names, it seems that Madra originally had belonged to a Brāhmaṇa family and later changed his allegiance to Jainism. This is supported by his epithet 'exceedingly affectionate towards Brāhmaṇas, religious preceptors and ascetics' *(dvija-guru-yatishu prāyaśaḥ prītimān)*. However, on this point Bhandarkar[179] writes that, though by religious persuasion he (*i.e.*, Madra) was a Jaina, he was Hindu socially.

A copper-plate inscription[180] of the [Gupta] year 159 (479 A.D.) from Pāhārpur in Bangladesh is one of the most interesting Jaina records of the Gupta period. This inscription is stated to be the earliest Jaina record from this region[181]. It records an endowment for the worship of *Arhats* to a *Vihāra* in Vaṭagōhālī, presided over by the disciples descended from the Nirgrantha *Āchārya* Guhanandin of Kāśī. This Guhanandin is further described as belonging to Pañchastuūpa-nikāya. The persons who were responsible for the endowment were a Brāhmaṇa named Nāthaśarman and his wife Rāmī. The language of the inscription shows that this Brāhmaṇa pair were zealous devotees of Guhanandin. It is apparent also from this inscription that this Guhanandin flourished quite some time before the date of this inscription, for the *Vihāra* is said to have been presided over by his *śishyas* and *praśishyas*. This inscription offers a rare instance of a Brāhmaṇa devoted to Jainism.

Regarding the expression *Pañchastūpa-nikāya* occurring in this record, Chatterjee[182] gives the following explanation. "In Harisēna's *Bṛihatkathākōśa* we have an account of the founding of five *stūpas (pañchastūpa)* at Mathurā. It is probable that the Digambara monks belonging to the Pañchastūpa sect of Mathurā afterwards sent a few of the members of their sect to different parts of India. It is also not unlikely that Vārāṇasi was the earliest seat of this particular sect. In any case, we have to regard Pañchastūpanikāya sect as one of the earliest branches of the Digambara school." This epigraph proves the prevalence of Jainism in Bengal in the Gupta period. Further, it is interesting to note that it mentions the offering of perfume *(gandha)*, incense *(dhūpa)*, flowers *(sumana)* and lamp *(dīpa)* to the *Arhat*.

An inscription[183] in early Gupta characters in the Sōn Bhāṇḍār cave at the ancient town of Rājagriha (Rajgir, Nalanda District) states that Vairadēva obtained emancipation,

having shut himself up for spiritual enjoyment in this auspicious cell. This record obviously refers to the austere penance practised by the said *Muni*. This fact together with the reference to the image of the *Arhat* leaves no doubt that this was a sacred Jaina spot in the Gupta period.

Chatterjee refers to another mutilated inscription[184] on a Nēminātha figure in early Gupta characters found from Rajgir and identifies *Mahārājādhirāja* Chandra referred to in it with Chandragupta I or Chandragupta II. These two epigraphs attest to the existence of Jainism in Bihar in the Gupta period.

The discovery of the three Vidiśā stone image inscriptions[185] of Rāmagupta is a sensational event of recent times. They have established the much debated historicity of this ruler of the Gupta dynasty. They are equally important for the history of Jainism in the Gupta period. They record that *Mahārājādhirāja* Rāmagupta caused to be made the images of the *Arhats* Chandraprabha, Pushpadanta and Padmaprabha, under instruction from the mendicant Chēlla, son of Gōlakyānti and disciple of *Āchārya* Sarppasēna and the grand disciple of *Āchārya* Chandrakshama. These epigraphs indicate the genuine interest of Rāmagupta in Jainism. It may be noted here that Pushpadanta is another name of Suvidhinātha, the ninth Tirthaṅkara[186]. An interesting term occurring in these epigraphs which is an epithet of *Āchārya* Chandrakshama, is *pānipātrika*. It means 'one who uses his hands as a bowl'. This epithet indicates that this monk had taken a vow to use his palms alone as a bowl for the purpose of eating and drinking. This is a sample of the various kinds of austerities to which the Jaina monks of ancient India subjected themselves. Earlier we have referred to a lady who fasted for a month and *Muni* Vairadēva who attained Nirvāṇa by practising penance in a cave in which he shut himself up. Therefore, it may not be wrong to state that Jainism is another name given to austerities.

The Udayagiri cave inscription[187] of 425-26 A.D. belonging to the time of Kumāragupta records the erection of an image of Pārśva by Śaṅkara, a disciple of Gōśarman who was a disciple of Bhadrāchārya of Āryakula. It is stated in this record that Śaṅkara was formerly a warrior but afterwards adhered to the path of ascetisism. His martial qualities referred to in the inscription tend to show that he was a petty ruler at least.

This inscription together with those of Rāmagupta referred to above show that Jainism not only prospered but also gained the support of the ruling class to a limited extent in Madhya Pradesh, during the Gupta period.

Inscriptions are silent regarding the state of Jainism in the post- Gupta period of our concern. The copper-plate charters of the Maitrakas and Harsha and the epigraphs of the Maukhari rulers have practically nothing to state about Jainism. However, Jainism prospered under the rule of the Maitrakas of Valabhī and Harsha as witnessed by literary sources.

Jaina literary works present Valabhi as a great centre of Jainism. They speak of two Jaina councils that were held at Valabhi. According to them a council was held at Valabhi under the presidentship of Nāgārjuna in the third quarter of the 4th century A.D. This council, it is said, coincided with the one held at Mathurā and both of them were convened for the purpose of compiling the Jaina canon[188]. Further, we are told that another council, generally called the Second Council at Valabhi, was held probably during the reign of Dhruvasēna I who is also praised as a Jaina convert in a later tradition. But the association of the Council with this king is said to be doubtful[189]. There are other literary evidences to show that Jainism was in a flourishing condition during the rule of the Maitraka kings[190]. In this connection we can only observe that the epigraphical records of the Maitraka dynasty do not show that any of its rulers was inclined towards Jainism in the least. Contrarily, they clearly indicate that these rulers adopted Śaivism and Vaishṇavism as their personal religions, and greatly patronised Buddhism. Thus, it becomes evident that Jainism prospered in Gujarat by popular support in the post-Gupta period.

Harsha's service to Buddhism is too well known. Hiuen Tsang presents him as a pre-eminent Buddhist king. This Chinese traveller also attests to the existence of Jainism in certain regions of North India in the 7th century. He observes that the monks of both the *Śvētāmbara* and *Digambara* sects were to be found near Taxila to the west and Vipula to the east, and the Digambara Nirgranthas were very numerous in Puṇḍravardhana and Samataṭa in the east[191].

Ājīvikas

Though Ājīvikism is considered to be one of the five heterodox sects that arose along with Buddhism and Jainism, and said to have had a long history of about two thousand years before it became extinct[192], it is not referred to in the epigraphs of the period under discussion, excepting an inscription of Aśoka and three of his grandson Daśaratha. That in P.E. VII[193] the Ājīvikas are mentioned together with the Buddhists, Brāhmaṇas and Nirgranthas proves that they were considered as one of the important religious sects in the days of Aśoka. Two of the Barābar Hill Cave inscriptions of Aśoka record the gift of two caves by him to the Ājīvikas[194]. This is the only religious gift of Aśoka made to a non-Buddhistic sect. This gift seems to indicate that next to Buddhism Aśoka was personally interested in Ājīvikism. His grandson Daśaratha is also credited with the gift of three caves to the same sect as stated in his Nāgārjunī Hill Cave inscriptions[195]. Though we have no knowledge of the personal religion of Daśaratha, the Nāgārjunī Hill Caves stand out as a clear proof of his inclination towards the Ājīvika sect. Therefore, it is not beyond probability that he was himself an Ājīvika. Whatever it may be, there is no denying the fact that even in the heyday of Buddhism, the Ājīvikas were a prominent sect in Magadha and were patronised by these two Mauryan rulers.

Brahmanism

Epigraphs of the period of our study bear witness to the deliberate efforts towards the revival of the Vedic sacrifices on the one hand and the further development of devotionalism on the other. These two elements of the religious life of the period could no more be studied as independent entities. They fused into each other and the assimilation of certain other elements paved the way for the emergence of Hinduism or Brahmanism of the later times. Banerjee uses the term 'Neo-Brahmanism' to denote what we have called as Hinduism or Brahmanism. He defines it thus: "Neo-Brahmanism, as we know, is a mass of beliefs, opinions, usages, religious creeds and observances derived from manifold sources, hieratic or popular, Vedic or non-Vedic, native or foreign, Aryan or non Aryan, orthodox or dissenting. In short, it is a synthesis, the process of which streches over a long period, though it assumes a tangible shape in epic literature. Diversity is its very essence".[196]

Revival of the sacrificial cult

The institute of sacrifice which was the soul of the Vedic religion had lost its vigour and splendour by the beginning of the period of our study. This was partly due to the philosophy of the Upanishads and partly to the advent of the heterodox religious systems of Buddhism and Jainism. Though Aśoka was full of respect for the Brāhmaṇa class, his policy of non-violence was not conducive to the sacrificial cult, for in R.E. I[197] he orders in clear terms that no living being must be killed and sacrificed in his kingdom. Therefore, the performance of sacrifices seems to have suffered a setback in the reign of Aśoka.

The earliest datable epigraphical reference to the performance of a Vedic sacrifice is found in the Ayōdhyā inscription[198] of Dhana[dēva]. Though this inscription belongs to the 1st century A.D., it refers to the performance of a Vedic sacrifice as early as in the 2nd century B.C. by describing Pushyamitra Śuṅga (187 B.C.) as 'the performer of horse-sacrifice twice' *(dvir-aśvamēdha-yājinaḥ)*. Pushyamitra's horse-sacrifice is also referred to in the *Mahābhāshya* of Patañjali and the *Mālavikāgnimitram* of Kālidāsa[199]. This was the first recorded attempt at reviving the Vedic religion.

Next comes the Hāthi-Bāḍā inscription[200] at Nagarī near Chitōrgaṛh (Rajasthan). This record credits Gājāyana Pārāśarīputra Sarvatāta with the performance of an *Aśvamēdha* sacrifice. The patronymic Gājāyana indicates that Sarvatāta was a Brāhmaṇa and perhaps a ruler of the Kāṇva line[201]. This record has been assigned to the beginning of the 1st century B.C. on palaeographic grounds.

The Musānagar (Kanpur District, U.P.) brick inscription[202], palaeographically assigned to the 1st century B.C. records the performance of an *Aśvamēdha* sacrifice by a certain Devamitra. Coming from the same district, the Lucknow Museum brick inscription[203] of the 1st century A.D. records the performance of a horse-sacrifice by a certain Dāmamitra.

Then, the Isāpur *yūpa* inscription[204], dated in the year 24 of *Mahārāja Rājātirāja Dēvaputra Vāsishka* records the setting up of a *yūpa* after the performance of a sacrifice for twelve days by Drōṇala, son of Rudrila, a Chhāndōga Brāhmaṇa of the Bhāradvāja-gotra.

The Allahābād Municipal Museum *Yūpa* inscription[205], palaeographically assigned to the 2nd century A.D., commemorates the erection of as many as seven *yūpas* in connection with the performance of the seven Sōma sacrifices, technically known as *Sapta-Sōma-saṁsthā*. The sacrificer was Śivadatta, a minister of a certain king. It seems that a village was given to the officiating priests of the sacrifices. The concluding portion of this epigraph seems to record the gift of a village to a Śiva temple, and the last line expresses the hope that Mahēśvara be pleased *(prītimiyān= mahēśvara iti)*.

This record, referring to the performance of the seven sacrifices as well as to the gift made to a temple of Śiva, throws valuable light on the religious conditions in the post-Mauryan period. It shows how in the every day life of the 2nd century Hindu community Vedic and Puranic religions were harmoniously blended together. Further, the growing hold of the Puranic religion, even on the minds of those who were taking an active part in the revival of the Vedic relegion, is attested to by this inscription.

The Nāndsā (Rajasthan) *Yūpa* inscriptions[206] of the Krita year 282 (226 A.D.) commemorate the performance of the *Ēkashashṭhirātra* sacrificial session, which, as its name indicates, used to extend over 61 days. This sacrificial session was caused to be conducted by [Śrī?] Sōma of the Mālava clan. These records show that the Mālavas were zealous champions of the Vedic sacrifices, and though Kshatriyas by caste, were adopting names like Jayasōma and Śrisōma which shows a keen appreciation for the Brahmanical Vedic religion.

Like the Mālavas, the early Maukharis too were great supporters of the Vedic religion, as evidenced from their Baḍvā (Rajasthan) *Yūpa* inscriptions. In all, four inscribed *yūpas* have been discovered at the village Baḍvā, three of which are dated in the Kṛita year 295 (238 A.D.), and the fourth one is assigned to the 3rd century A.D. on palaeographical grounds. Each of the first three records[207] commemorates the performance of a *Trirātra* sacrifice by Balavardhana, Sōmadēva and Balasiṁha, the three sons of Bala, the glorious Maukhari commander-in-chief. They also refer to sacrificial fee *(dakshiṇā)* of a thousand cows in each case. The fourth record[208] commemorates the *Āptōryāma* sacrifice performed by Dhanuttrāta, son of Hastin of the Maukhari clan. Here also there is a reference to the honorarium of a thousand cows.

Altekar, the editor of all these records, writes: "It is interesting to note that the practice of erecting commemorative *yūpas* runs counter to the sentiments expressed in this connection by the authors of the Grihyasūtra and Dharmasūtra literature .... It would appear that with the revival of the Vedic sacrifices, the leaders of society and of the new movement ceased to subscribe to the above views of the Dharmasūtra writers and began to encourage the construction of the stone *yūpas* as a triumphant and enduring testimony

of the revival of the old Vedic religion. *Yūpa* is a veritable thunder bolt, says the *Aitarēya-Brāhmaṇa*. Hindu champions of the revival of the Vedic religion were obviously as proud of their commemorative stone *yūpas* as Indra was of his thunderbolt"[209].

Again, from Rajasthan itself, the Barnāla *Yūpa* inscriptions[210] of the 3rd century A.D. refer to Vedic sacrifices. One of them, dated in 228 A.D., records the erection of seven *yūpas* by a king whose name ends in -varddhana. The other one, dated in 279 A.D., commemorates the performance of five *Trirātra* or perhaps *Gargatrirātra* sacrifices, by a Brāhmaṇa sacrificer in which ninety cows with calves were given as *dakshiṇā*. The sacrificer was a Vaishṇavite and hence the record ends with the hope that Vishṇu would be pleased and religion promoted by his action *(Vashṭaḥ (Vishṇuḥ) priyatāṁ dharmmō varddh[tām*])*. Here we have another instance of the assimilation of the Vedic and Puranic religions.

Of the same period (3rd century A.D.), the Jagatpur (Dehradun District, U .P.) brick inscriptions[211] of Śīlavarman record the performance of no less than four *Aśvamēdha* sacrifices by this ruler whose family seems to have succeeded in founding a kingdom about the present Dehradun region on the ruins of the Kushāṇa empire[212].

Coming to the Gupta period, the performance of the *Aśvamēdha* sacrifice by Samudragupta is known from his coins and the epigraphs of his successors. Commenting on the expression *chir-ōtsannāśvamēdh-āharttā* occurring in the Bilsad and Bihar stone pillar inscriptions[213] of Kumāragupta and Budhagupta respectively, and referring to Samudragupta's *Aśvamēdha* sacrifice, Bhandarkar writes : "We have therefore to suppose that *Aśvamēdha* had remained *utsanna* for a long time, up till the time of this Gupta sovereign, but that, whether on account of his expedition in the south where Vedic lore and practices are still better preserved or on account of some other circumstances about which we know nothing at present, the elements of this sacrifice which were so long taken as lost or forgotten were recovered beyond all doubt and that in consequence thereof he celebrated the *Aśvamēdha*, whole and entire, without any one of its elements missing"[214]. In the light of the fact that the *Aśvamēdha* sacrifice was revived by Pushyamitra Śuṅga long before the advent of the Guptas, all that we can say is that Samudragupta restored this particular Vedic sacrifice in all its elaborate ritualistic forms.

In the Ēraṇ stone pillar inscription[215] of Budhagupta (Year 165), Indravishṇu, the great-grandfather of *Mahārāja* Mātrivishṇu, is styled as a Brāhmaṇa sage who performed sacrifices (*Kratu-yājinaḥ*). Further, the Bihar stone inscription[216] of the same king records the erection of a sacrificial post *(yūpa)* in front of a circle of shrines of Bhadrāryā and other deities.

These instances bear clear testimony to the revival of the sacrificial cult under the rulers of the Gupta dynasty.

Of the Gupta period itself, the Bijayagaḍh stone pillar inscription[217] of Vishṇuvardhana of the Varika tribe, dated in 372-73 A.D., records the erection of a sacrificial post by this ruler, after the completion of a *Puṇḍarika* sacrifice.

Of a later period, the Baḍagaṅgā Rock inscription[218] of *Mahārājādhirāja* Bhūtivarman of Prāgjyōtisha, dated in 553-54 A.D., styles this king as 'the performer of the *Aśvamēdha* sacrifice' (*aśvamēdhayājinām*).

Though none of the Maitraka rulers is said to have himself performed or encouraged the Vedic sacrifices, the charter of Vishṇushēṇa[219], who was probably related to the Maitraka dynasty according to Sircar[220], refers to Vedic sacrifices. This charter, dated in 592 A.D., states in its Regulation No. 22 that, persons engaged in such works as a sacrifice or a marriage ceremony should not be summoned to court to refute the charges brought against them (*Parēṇ= ārth-ābhiyuktānāṁ vāda-pratisamāsanē yajñia-sattra-vivāh=ādishu āhvānaṁ na kārayēt*, Text, l.9). From the fact that sacrifices are treated on par with marriage ceremony, and that persons engaged in both of them were not to be summoned to the court, it becomes evident that sacrifices were very frequently performed and they were honoured by the government under the rule of Vishṇushēṇa.

What becomes clear from these instances is the fact that soon after the decline of the Mauryan power in North India the revival of the Vedic sacrifices was initiated by the Kāṇva and Śuṇga rulers who were Brāhmaṇas, and that it was continued by the rulers like the Mālavas and Maukharis who ruled in different parts of North India. From the provenance of the epigraphs referred to above it becomes evident that U.P. and Rajasthan were centres of this new movement in the post-Mauryan period, which gained further support under the imperial Guptas. It is to be noted that throughout the period during which the Vedic sacrifices were being revived, Brahmanical religions of Vaishṇavism and Śaivism, too, made rapid progress. In fact, the sacrificial cult and the Brahmanical religions never came into mutual clash during the period of our study. They seem to have supplemented each other and by absorbing certain other cults like the worship of the Sun-god, emerged as what is known as the Neo-Brahmanism by the end of the Gupta period.

Vaishṇavism

There is a world of difference between the status of Vishṇu as a Vedic god and that of the same deity of the Epic-Puranic times. Vishṇu held a comparatively subordinate position in the *Ṛigvēda*. His importance, however, increased in the *Brāhmaṇa* literature and by the age of the Epics and the *Purāṇas*, he came to attain the status of the supreme deity and the most influential member of the Brahmanical triad[221]. The deity round whom various Vaishṇava cults grew in the historic period was a result of the syncretism of three god-concepts, the Vedic Sun-god Vishṇu, the cosmic god Nārāyaṇa of the *Brāhmaṇas* and the man-god Vāsudēva-Kṛishṇa whose worship is attested to even by *Pāṇini*[222].

Though Aśokan inscriptions refer to Brāhmaṇas along with Buddhists and Jains, they do not state anything regarding the nature of the religion followed by the former. What all we can guess from R.E. I is that, on account of the prohibition on slaughtering

of animals for the sake of sacrifices, the Vedic religion experienced, perhaps, a serious setback. But, from the epigraphical records of the Post- Aśokan period it becomes clear that even during the days of Aśoka the Vedic religion had lost its vigour, and Śaivism and Vaishṇavism had already emerged out as popular religious cults.

Commenting on the Vedic, Śaiva and Vaishṇava names (we have mentioned some of them in our chapter on the social conditions) of the individuals figuring as donees in the Sāñchi *stūpa* inscriptions assigned to the 3rd-2nd century B.C., Bühler writes thus : "The occurrence among the Buddhists of names connected with the ancient Vedic religion, as well as of such as connected with Vaishṇavism and Śaivism, in these early inscriptions, has no doubt to be explained by the assumption that their bearers or their ancestors adhered to these creeds before their conversion, and that they received their names in accordance with the established custom of their families. The rules regarding the giving of names were probably then as lax among the Buddhists as they are in the present day among heterodox sects of India, which by no means restrict themselves to the lists of their particular saints or deities. Their historical value consists therein that they form a link in the chain of evidence which enables us to trace the existence, nay the prevalence of Vaishṇavism and Śaivism, not only during the third century B.C., but during much earlier times, and to give a firm support to the view now held by a number of Orientalists, according to which Vaishṇavism and Śaivism are older than Buddhism and Jainism"[223]. Thus, the Sāñchi *stūpa* inscriptions attest to the hoary antiquity of the Śaiva and Vaishṇava cults.

However, it is in an epigraph of the 2nd century B.C. that we come across the direct reference to the worship of Vāsudēva. Thus, the Besnagar (Madhya Pradesh) Garuḍa pillar inscription[224] records the erection of the Garuḍa column in honour of *Dēvādēva* Vāsudēva by *Bhāgavata* Heliodorus, son of Dion and an inhabitant of Takshaśilā, who came as the Yavana ambassador from Antialkidas, the Greek king of Takshaśilā, to the court of the king Kāśīputra Bhāgabhadra of Vidiśā. This epigraph is of great importance, for it proves that the cult of Vāsudēva, the god of gods, had grown to such an extent by this time that it could influence even a foreigner of high social standing and culture, whose practical devotion to Vāsudēva is evidenced by the erection of this column. Further, the second part of this epigraph reads :

Trini amuta-padāni [ia]su-anuṭhitāni*

neyaṁti [svagaṁ] dama chāga apramāda

This means that 'the three immortal precepts of self-restraint, self- denial and vigilance, when practised well (in this world) lead (one) to heaven'. From this it becomes clear that the Greek convert, who must have been thoroughly acquainted with the contents of this inscription, if not drafted it himself, could pick out the very essence of the tenets of this Bhakti school. Another noteworthy information furnished by this inscription is that the identification of Vedic Vishṇu with Vāsudēva had already taken place by this

time, because the column is named in it as *Garuḍa-dhvaja* and it is well known that *Garuḍa* is nothing but the sun conceived by the Vedic sages as a 'beautiful-winged divine bird *(divyō suparṇō Garutmān)*' and Vedic Vishṇu was an aspect of the sun[225].

Banerjee refers to another Garuḍa column preserved in the Besnagar Museum. He states that it contains a broken Brāhmī inscription which records that the column was erected for the Bhagavat by one Gautamīputra who was a follower of Bhāgavatism during the twelfth regnal year of *Mahārāja* Bhāgavata, who, according to Bhandarkar, is the Śuṅga king of the same name mentioned in the Purāṇas[226].

Banerjee further refers to a capital of a column and a *makara* discovered by Bhandarkar near the Garuḍa column of Helidoruṣ, and holds that there stood at Besnagar a shrine of Pradyumna[227]. Thus, we come to know that Vidiśā was an early centre of Bhāgavata activities.

Another such important centre during this period was Nagarī near Chitōrgarh in Rajasthan. The Hāthi-bāḍa inscription[228] from this place belongs to the beginning of the 1st century B.C. It records the erection of an enclosing wall round the stone object of worship called Nārāyaṇa Vāṭikā (compound) *(pūjāśilā-prākārō Nārāyaṇa-vāṭikā)* for the divinities Saṁkarshaṇa and Vāsudēva by one Sarvatāta who was a devotee of Bhagavat and had performed an *Aśvamēdha* sacrifice. Bhandarkar holds that the stone object of worship referred to in this record depicted the footprints of the two brother gods carved in stone[229]. He further states: "In course of time, however, Saṁkarshaṇa lost hold of the popular imagination and Vāsudēva alone remained the object of worship. This change of worship is noticeable even in that early period. Just as in the time of Hāthi-bāḍa record Saṁkarshaṇa and Vāsudēva were both worshipped, the celebrated Nānāghāṭ inscription of Sātakarṇi opens with obeisance to both these divinites. On the other hand, the Besnagar pillar epigraph speaks of Vāsudēva alone and styles him *dēva-dēva*, 'god of gods.' The three inscriptions belong to a period ranging between 135 and 35 B.C. And yet at this early period we find Vāsudēva eclipsing and outliving his elder brother Saṁkarshaṇa in popular worship"[230].

It is a noteworthy point that Sarvatāta who is stated to be a devotee of Bhagavat is also said to have performed an *Aśvamēdha* sacrifice. This clearly indicates that the process of assimilation of Vedic and Epic-Puranic religions was at work during the period of this inscription.

Vaishṇava tradition associates the city of Mathurā and the places around it with Vāsudēva-Kṛishṇa and his relations and the cult associated with them. Several inscriptions, mostly fragmentary, have been found in this region and they prove beyond doubt its close connection with Bhāgavatism. The earliest among them are two brick inscriptions[231], palaeographically assignable to the 2nd-1st century B.C., forming part of a brick structure below the Manmohan temple complex at Brindavan near Mathurā. The two bricks bear identical texts reading *Bhāgavatēna Naṭakēna kāritaṁ* which means that the brick temple

of Bhagavat was built by Naṭaka, a *Bhāgavata*. Incidentally we may point out here that this seems to be the earliest as yet known instance of a brick temple in North India.

Another important inscription is the Mōrā well inscription[232] which records the establishment of the beautiful and resplendent images of the five heroes of the Vrishni clan in the stone temple during the reign of Svāmi *(Mahākshatrapa Sōḍāsa)*, the son of *Mahākshatrapa* Rājūvula, by one Tōshā, who was probably a lady of the Śaka race. Reference to the worship of the five holy Vṛishṇi-vīras (*Vṛishṇīnāṁ pañcha-vīrāṇāṁ*, Text, l.2) occurring in this epigraph is quite interesting. On the basis of a passage in the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, Banerjee identifies these five heroes with Saṁkarshaṇa, Vāsudēva, Pradyumna, Sāmba and Aniruddha. He states that this passage clearly emphasises their original character as human heroes deified by their admirers and followers by describing them as *Manushyaprakṛiti dēvas* who belonged to the same clan or dynasty *(vaṁśa*, evidently Vṛishṇi-vaṁśa); and that these names are recorded in this epigraph in correct dynastic order. He further holds that in the light of this important Puranic evidence it is justifiable to conclude that the names of Saṁkarshaṇa and Vāsudēva in the Nagarī inscription of Sarvatāta are those of two of the *Vīras* and not *Vyūhas*[233]. Thus, this inscription shows that there was a stone temple in the vicinity of Mathurā in the 1st century A.D., if not earlier, where the images of the worshipful Pañcha-vīras of the Vṛishṇi clan were enshrined.

Another fragmentary inscription[234] of the same period found at Mathurā records the gift of a *toraṇa* (gateway) and a *vedikā* (railing) made of stone *(śailaṁ)* in the great sanctuary *(mahāsthāna)* of Bhagavān Vāsudēva. The record was engraved on a stone door- jamb which, according to Lüders, originally belonged to the Bhāgavata shrine where the images of the Pañcha-vīras were set up. He has suggested that the gifts recorded in the door-jamb inscription were by way of embellishment of the original Vāsudēva temple[235]. Reference to this temple as *Mahāsthāna* attests to the sanctity and devotion with which it was held by the Bhāgavatas in the first quarter of the 1st century A.D. Thus, these epigraphs prove the close association of the Mathurā region with Vāsudēva worship presumably from a time earlier than the 1st century A.D.

When compared to the bulk of the Buddhist and Jaina epigraphs of Mathurā the number of the Bhāgavata inscriptions from this place falls too short. Commenting on H.C. Ray Chaudhuri's suggestion that the paucity of the Bhāgavata inscriptions at Mathurā during the reigning period of the Śaka and Kushāṇa rulers might be due to the fact that these rulers were mostly Buddhists and Śiva worshippers and probably not well disposed towards the religion of Vāsudēva, Banerjee writes as follows: " ..... there is no direct evidence to show that the Indo-Scythic rulers of Mathura were anti-Bhāgavata in their attitude. Whatever might have been the personal creed of the Śaka and Kushāṇa rulers, from the coins and inscriptions of their time it appears that they were eclectic in their religious attitude .... Though the Bhāgavata records at Mathurā of Indo-Scythic times are very few, we have a reasonably good number of Bhāgavata sculptures of Mathura assignable to c. 150 B.C. to 250 A.D."[236].

We have earlier noted that Sarvatāta of the Nagarī inscription had performed an *Aśvamēdha* sacrifice, and also that one of the *yūpa* inscriptions of the 3rd century A.D. from Barnāla invokes Vishṇu at the end. These two instances indicate the assimilation of the Vedic religion and Vaishṇavism during the post-Mauryan period.

One of the many features of the Gupta Age is the conspicuous growth of Vaishṇavism. From the epigraphs and coins of the Gupta rulers and their feudatories and contemporaries it becomes evident that Vaishṇavism enjoyed royal as well as popular patronage in the various regions that came under the cultural influence of the Guptas.

The Allahābād pillar inscription[237] refers to the *garutmad-aṅka* (Garuḍa seal) of Samudragupta and actually represents him as Vishṇu in human form. Further he is described as equal to the four *Lōkapālas, viz.*, Kubēra, Varuṇa, Indra and Yama, and also as 'one who is mortal only in celebrating the observances of mankind, but otherwise a god dwelling on the earth'. But more important is the passage of the same record wherein Samudragupta is represented as identical with the *Achintya-purusha* or Inscrutable Being, *i.e.* Vishṇu, who is 'the cause of the prosperity of the pious and destruction of the wicked' (*sādhv-asādh-ūdaya-pralaya-hētu-purushasy=ächintyasya*, Text, l.25). This reminds us of the well known verse from the Bhagavadgītā, *Paritrāṇāya sādhūnām etc.* Thus, it becomes clear that Samudragupta was greatly devoted to the god Vishṇu. But, he was not a Bhāgavata, for neither in his Allahābād pillar inscription nor in the records of his successors is the epithet *Paramabhāgavata* applied to him[238]. But, if Bhandarkar's view that there is no definite evidence to show that the Nālandā grant of Samudragupta is a spurious record[239] is accepted, we have to hold that Samudragupta also was a Bhāgavata, for he is given the title of *Paramabhāgavata* in this record[240]. We, however, personally feel that Harishēṇa, who composed the Allahābād pillar *praśasti*, could not have forgotten to describe Samudragupta as a Bhāgavata had it been true.

From the days of Chandragupta II, the Gupta emperors were the most influential advocates of the Bhāgavata form of Vaishṇavism. Their patronage seems to have been one of the principal causes for the great popularity of this creed all over the country from the 5th century A.D.

It is well known that the successors of Samudragupta bore the title of *Paramabhāgavata*. The Gupta supremacy was felt by the contemporary North Indian rulers, not only in the political sphere but also in the religious sphere. Thus, we find that many of the feudatory and contemporary rulers of the Guptas were champions of Vaishṇavism. *Mahārāja* Mātrivishṇu, figuring in the inscriptions of Budhagupta[241] and Tōramāṇa[242] from Ēraṇ, is styled *Atyantabhagavadbhakta*. The Pāṇḍava kings Mahā-Nannarāja[243] and Tīvara[244] bore the title of *Paramavaishṇava*. The passage " .... *anēka-janmāntar-ārādhita- bhagavan-nārāyaṇa-bhaṭṭārakapāda-prasād-āsādita*", (Text, ll.1-2), occurring in the Aḍhabhāra plates[245] of Mahā-Nannarāja, and the fact that the Pāṇḍuvaṁśis had the Vaishṇavite emblem of Garuḍa on their seal[246], clearly show that they devotedly subscribed to Vaishṇavism.

Likewise, the Śarabhapuriya kings Narēndra[247], Jayarāja[248], Sudēvarāja[249], Pravararāja[250] and Pravararāja II[251], that is to say the rulers of this family who are known to us from their copper-plate charters, are styled *Paramabhāgavata*. Even among the Maitraka rulers of Valabhī, who were staunch supporters of Śaivism, Dhruvasēna I was a follower of Bhāgavatism, and is styled *Paramabhāgavata*[252]. The Susuniā (Bankura District, West Bengal) Rock inscription[253], palaeographically assigned to the 4th century A.D., refers to a certain *Mahārāja* Chandravarman who is styled *Chakrasvāmidāsāgra*. This indicates the existence of Vaishṇavism in Bengal in the 4th century A.D.

We have no evidences, epigraphical or sculptural, to prove the existence of Vaishṇavism in the Gupta period before the times of Samudragupta. The Allahābād pillar *praśasti* only eulogises Samudragupta as a great Vaishṇava but does not refer to any solid contribution from him for Vaishṇavism.

From the time of Chandragupta II we have a number of epigraphs referring to the activities of the Vaishṇavas in different parts of the Gupta empire. His Meharauli iron pillar inscription[254] records the erection of the pillar, which is called a 'standard' of god Vishnu (*bhagavatō Vishṇōr=dhvajaḥ*), on a hill called Vishṇupada. We are expressly told that this pillar was erected by Chandra whose mind was fixed upon Vishṇu with devotion. This statement fully agrees with the title *Paramabhāgavata* of this emperor. The Udayagiri (Vidiśā, M.P.) cave inscription[255] of the same emperor records the excavation of a temple, obviously for god Vishṇu as can be known from the standing figures of Vishnu on both sides of the entrance of the cave and also the figure of the four armed Vishṇu below the inscription. The Mandasōr inscription[256] of Naravarman, dated in 404-05 A.D., refers to a shrine of Krishṇa at Daśapura. Similarly, the Tuśām inscription[257] of the 5th century A.D. records the making of two reservoirs and a house for the use of the god Vishṇu under the name of Bhagavat, by *ächārya* Sōmatrāta whose great-grandfather Yaśastrāta is styled as a *Sātvata* and *Bhagavadbhakta*.

We know from their inscriptions that Chandragupta II's daughter, the Vākāṭaka queen Prabhāvatiguptā and her husband *Mahārāja* Rudrasēna were devotees of Vishṇu. The Riddhapur plates[258] of Prabhāvatiguptā open with the invocation *Jitaṁ Bhagavatā*, and they style this queen as *Bhagavatpād-ānudhyatā*. Similarly, her Poonā plates[259] also open with the same invocation to Bhagavat and they record a land grant to the foot-prints of the Bhagavat (*Bhagavatpādamūlē*). Here too the queen is styled as a fervent devotee of the Bhagavat (Vishṇu). In the Jāmb plates[260] of Pravarasēna II, his father Rudrasēna II is said to have earned royal fortune by the grace of *Chakrapāṇi* (=Vishṇu) (*Bhagavataḥ Chakrapāṇēḥ prasād-ōpārjita śrīsamudayasya*). These instances show that the Vākāṭakas were highly influenced by the Vaishṇava leanings of the Gupta monarchs.

The Baigrām (Bogra Dist., E. Pakistan) copper-plate inscription[261] of the [Gupta] year 128 (447-48 A.D.) records land grant made by two brothers to the temple of Gōvindasvāmin which was founded by their father. Obviously, this temple was

founded during the last years of the reign of Chandragupta II, or early years of Kumāragupta I.

From all these epigraphs it becomes evident that in the reign of Chandragupta II Vaishṇavism prospered in different parts of his empire from the Haryana region in the north-west to Maharashtra in the south-west, Bengal in the east and Central India in the South.

We have come across only two epigraphs of the reign of Kumāragupta referring to Vaishṇavism. The Gaṅgdhār (Madhya Pradesh) stone inscription[262] of Viśvavarman, who was a feudatory of Kumāragupta, is dated in 424-25 A.D. and records the erection of a temple of Vishṇu and that of the divine mothers by Mayūrāksha, a minister of Viśvavarman. There is a reference to god Vishṇu in the damaged opening portion of this record. Another such record[263] is the Nagarī (Rajasthan) inscription of 424 A.D. This epigraph begins with a verse in praise of Vishṇu and records the erection of a temple of Vishṇu by three Bania brothers, Satyasura, Srugandha and Dāsa. Further, it is to be noted that in the Gaḍhwā (Allahābād District, U.P.) stone inscription[264] of the year 98 Kumāragupta is styled as *Paramabhāgavata*.

The Bhitarī (Gazipur District, U.P.) stone pillar inscription[265] of Skandagupta records the installation of an image of the god Vishṇu probably under the name of Kumārasvāmin, so called after his father, and allotment of a village to this god. The Gaḍhwā stone inscription[266] of 467-68 A.D., probably belonging to the reign of the same king, records the installation of an image of the god Vishṇu, under the name Anantasvāmin. The same deity is called Chitrakūṭasvāmin in this record, and perhaps this refers to the god Vishṇu in his incarnation as Rāma[267]. These two records attest to the prevalence of Vaishṇavism in Uttar Pradesh during the reign of Skandagupta. The flourishing state of Vaishṇavism in Saurashtra during this period is proved by the Junāgaḍh inscription[268] of Skandagupta. This record commences with a praise of Vishṇu, and its second part records that Chakrapālita caused to be built a temple of the god Vishṇu under the name of Chakrabhṛit (the bearer of discus) on Mount Ūrjayat.

Of the post-Skandagupta period, we get references to Vaishṇavism in the inscriptions from Ēraṇ and Khōh in M.P., and Dāmōdarpur in Bengal. The Ēraṇ stone pillar inscription[269] of Budhagupta, dated in 484-85 A.D., opens with a praise of Vishṇu styled as *Chaturbhuja* and *Garuḍakētu*, and records the erection of the column which is called a *dhvaja-stambha* or 'flag-staff' of the god Vishṇu, under the name of Janārdana, by *Mahārāja* Mātṛivishṇu and his younger brother Dhanyavishṇu. Subsequently, Dhanyavishṇu erected a temple at Ēraṇ itself for the Varāha incarnation of Vishṇu as is known from the Ēraṇ stone boar inscription[270] of Tōramāṇa. The praise of the Varāha-mūrtti of Vishṇu at the commencement of this record is in keeping with its object. The Khōh copper-plate inscription[271] of the Uchchakalpa *Mahārāja* Jayanātha, dated in 496-97 A.D., records the grant of a village to some Brāhmaṇas for a temple of god Vishṇu

under the name of Bhagavat. It is a noteworthy point that one of the donees of this grant is styled as *Bhāgavata*. Another Khōh copper-plate inscription[272] of *Mahārāja* Sarvanātha, son of *Mahārāja* Jayanātha, records a similar gift of a village made by the king jointly to a temple of Vishṇu and that of the Sun-god. The Dāmōdarpur copper-plate inscription[273] of Budhagupta refers to the erection of shrines of Kōkāmukhasvāmin and Śvētavarāhasvāmin. Another copper- plate record[274] from the same place, belonging to the reign of Vishṇugupta and dated in 542-43 A.D., records the purchase of land to make prōvision for daily worship, repairs, etc., to the temple of the god Śvētavarāhasvāmin, probably the same deity referred to in the previous record. Kōkāmukhasvāmin and Śvētavarāhasvāmin are two well known forms of Vishṇu, extolled in the *Varāha-Purāṇa*[275].

Of the Maukhari rulers, the Barābar Hill Cave inscription[276] of Anantavarman, belonging to *c.* first half of the 6th century A.D., records the installation of an image of the god Vishṇu, in his incarnation as Krishṇa, by the king.

Of the 7th century A.D., the Muṇḍēśvarī (Bihar) inscription[277] of Udayasēna, dated in the [Harsha] year 30, records the erection of a *maṭha* of the *dēvakula* of Nārāyaṇa by the *Kulapati* Bhāgudalana.

The Tipperah copper-plate[278] grant of the king Lōkanātha, dated in 650 A.D., refers to a temple of the god Ananta-Nārāyaṇa erected by the *Mahāsāmanta* Pradōshaśarman and land grant made to it by the king. The Aphsad stone inscription[279] of Ādityasēna of the Gupta family of Magadha, palaeographically assigned to the 7th century A.D., records the building of a temple of the god Vishṇu by the king. Likewise, the Mandāra Hill Rock (Bihar) inscription[280] of the same king records that a certain Balabhadra had put up a statue of Varāha (i.e. the Boar incarnation of Vishṇu). Lastly, the Sārnāth stone inscription[281] of a king named Prakaṭāditya, palaeographically assigned to the 7th century A.D., records the erection of a temple of the god Vishṇu under the name of Muradvisha and grant made for its maintenance.

At this juncture we would like to mention two interesting inscriptions of the Gupta period referring to Vaishṇavism. The first one is the Mandāra Hill Narasiṁha Cave inscription[282], assigned to the 4th-5th century A.D. It begins with the well-known invocation *Jitaṁ Bhagavatā*, and introduces *Bhagavat* Virajōguhāsvāmin whom Sircar[283] holds to be the same as the god Narasiṁha worshipped in the cave wherein the inscription is incised. This is a rare, if not unique, epigraphical reference to the Man-lion incarnation of Vishṇu during the Gupta period. Another record is the Umāchal (Assam) Rock inscription[284] of *Mahārājādhirāja* Surēndravarman, assignable to a mean date of the 5th century A.D., which records the erection of a cave-temple by the king for *Bhagavat* Balabhadrasvāmin. Sircar[285] thus writes about the significance of this epigraph: "The importance of the Umāchal rock inscription therefore lies in the fact that it testifies to the independent worship of Balabhadra in Assam about the fifth century A.D. Thus it

appears that, even though the independent worship of this Vaishnavite deity was no longer popular, it did not die out in the Gupta period."

This survey of the epigraphical records clearly shows that Vaishnavism was in a flourishing state throughout North India during the Gupta period. It was zealously patronised and spread by not only the Gupta emperors but also their feudatories and contemporaries. We have also quoted a few epigraphs of the post-Gupta period which testify to the prevalence of Vaishnavism in North India in the 7th century A.D. However, Vaishnavism seems to have lost its vigour and splendour to some extent during this period due to the pro-Buddistic attitude of Harsha on the one hand and the Śaivite leanings of the Maitraka rulers on the other.

Now we may proceed to note the salient features of Vaishnavism of the Gupta period. The concept of Vishnu of the Gupta period was not that of a hero of the Vrishni clan or dynasty as it was in the post-Mauryan period. It had inculcated the Vedic, Epic-Puranic and also the popular aspects of this god. "The Vishnu of the Gupta period," states Bhandarkar, "is Vedic Vishnu, Purusha-Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudēva-Krishna and Gōpāla-Krishna rolled into one"[286]. The first verse of the Mandasōr inscription[287] of Naravarman runs thus :

Sahasra-śirasē tasmai purushāy=āmit-ātmanē [|*]

chatus-samudra-paryyaṅka-tōya-Nidrālavē namaḥ [||*].

The very expression *sahasra-śirasē* of this verse reminds us of the famous *Purusha-sūkta* of the Rigvēda, which begins with *sahasra-śirshā purushaḥ*. The second half of this verse refers to the Nārāyaṇa form of Vishnu as explained in the verse *Āpō nārā iti prōktā āpō vai nara-sūnavaḥ | tā yad=asy=āyanam pārvam tēna Nārāyaṇaḥ smṛitaḥ ||* in the *Manusmṛiti* (quoted in Apte)[288]. Thus, in this verse Vishnu is identified with the Purusha and Nārāyaṇa. Further, the praise of Vāsudēva in verse 11 and reference to a temple of Krishna in line 5 of the second fragment of this record show the identity of Krishna and Vishnu.

The opening verse of the Ēraṇ stone inscription[289] of Budhagupta, which also refers to the Nārāyaṇa aspect of Vishnu, styles this god as four-armed *(Chaturbhuja)* and as 'one whose ensign is Garuḍa' *(Garuḍakētu)*. As explained by Bhandarkar[290] the association of Garuḍa with Vishnu is a development from the Rigvedic period. Thus, it becomes evident that Vishnu of the Gupta period also includes in himself the Vedic Vishnu.

On the basis of verse 3 of the Mandasōr inscription mentioned above, referring to a festival of Indra that was approved by Krishna, and the *Harivaṁśa* and other *Purāṇas*, Bhandarkar[291] holds that this Krishna is the same as *Gopāla-Krishna*. Further, he points out the completion of the temple consecrated to Krishna, which is the object of this record, and presuming the identity of the deity referred to in verse 3 with the one for whom the temple was consecrated, concludes that the god Vishnu of the Gupta period was also identified with Gōpāla-Krishna.

An important aspect of Vaishnavism of the Gupta period was the popularity of the worship of the *Avatāras*, i.e., descents or incarnations of Vishnu. The origin of the *Avatāra* concept has been traced right in the later Vedic literature itself[292]. The number of *Avatāras* varies in different literary traditions, though from the medieval period the ten well-known *Avatāras* became universally recognised[293]. In the North Indian epigraphs of the Gupta period some of these *Avatāras* are met with.

The Varāha *avatāra* (the Boar-incarnation) seems to have been the most popular in the Gupta period. A stone image of Varāha bearing an inscription[294] of the reign of the Hūṇa king Tōramāṇa (*c.* 500 A.D.) records the construction of a stone temple of 'Nārāyaṇa who has the form of a boar' *(Bhagavatō Varāhamūrttēḥ)* at Ēraṇ. A Dāmōdarpur inscription[295] of the time of Budhagupta speaks of the gods Śvētavarāha-svāmin and Kōkāmukha-svāmin, the former representing the Varāha *avatāra*.

The only epigraphical record of the period of our study attesting to the existence of a temple of Vishnu in his Narasiṁha (Man- lion) incarnation is the Mandāra Hill inscription[296]. Palaeographically this record has been assigned to a mean date of 5th century A.D. On the basis of the provenance of this record in the Narasiṁha cave on the Mandāra Hill, Bhagavat Virajōguhāsvāmin mentioned in it has been identified with the god Narasiṁha worshipped in the cave.

The *Vāmanāvatāra* (Dwarf-incarnation) was well known during the Gupta period. It is indicated by the epithets *Indrānuja* and *Upēndra*, meaning Indra's younger brother, applied to Vishnu in the Bihar pillar inscription[297]. The Junāgaḍh inscription[298] of Skandagupta also refers to Vishnu 'who, for the sake of the happiness of the lord of gods, seized back from Bali the goddess of wealth and splendour' (*Śriyam= abhimata-bhōgyām naika-kāl-āpanītām tridaśa[pa]ti-sukh-ārttham yō [Ba]lēr=ājahāra |*, Text, l.1)).

The incarnation of Vishnu as Rāma, son of Daśaratha, was known in the Gupta period. We have earlier referred to the Riddhapur plates of Prabhāvatiguptā. The charter contained in these plates was issued from the foot-print of the Lord of Rāmagiri *(Rāmagirisvāminaḥ pādamūlāt)*. Mirashi[299] identifies this Rāmagiri with modern Rāmṭek and the Lord of Rāmagiri with *Dāśarathi* Rāma, basing on the description of Rāmagiri as marked by the foot-prints of Raghupati, in the *Mēghadūta* of Kālidāsa. We have also seen that perhaps there is a reference to the *Rāmāvatāra* in the Gaḍhwā inscription of 467-68 A.D., and how the Umāchal Rock inscription attests to the practice of the independent worship of Balabhadra in Assam in the 5th century A.D.

Another interesting feature of Vaishnavism of the Gupta period is the concept of Lakshmī or Śrī as the consort of Vishnu. The popularity of the Vedic goddess Śrī-Lakshmī is well attested to even in the pre-Gupta period. But her concept as the wife of Vishnu is, however, considerably late[300].

The Junāgaḍh inscription[301] of Skandagupta mentions Vishnu as a perpetual resort of Lakshmī *(Kamala-nila[ya]nā[yā]h śāśvatam dhāma Lakshmyāḥ sa jayati vijit-ārttir=*

Vishṇur=atyanta-jishṇuḥ, Text, ll.1-2). The Sārnāth stone inscription[302] of Prakaṭāditya refers to Lakshmī as (the consort) of Vāsudēva (*Lakshmīr=iva Vāsu[dēvasya* ||], Text, l.4). In the Aphsad inscription[303] of Ādityasēna the feet of Mādhava, son of Vasudēva, are spoken as graced by the attentions of Śrī.

We may conclude this section with a list of the various names of Vishṇu met with in the Gupta inscriptions. Bhandarkar[304] has listed them as follows: Ananta-svāmin, Bhagavat, Chakrabhṛit, Chakragadādhara, Chakrapāṇi, Chakrasvāmin, Garuḍakētu, Gōvinda, Gōvinda-svāmin, Indrānuja, Janārdana, Madhusūdana, Nārāyaṇa, Purusha, Śārṅgin and Vāsudēva.

These names of the god Vishṇu and his different incarnations mentioned above give an idea of the extent of development of the Vaishṇava mythology in the Gupta period as depicted in the inscriptions.

Śaivism

Just as Vaishṇavism developed round the figure of Vishṇu, Śaivism developed round the pre-Vedic non-Aryan god Śiva. Śiva with his Harappan and Vedic prototypes, is one of the oldest and most widely worshipped deities of Brahmanism. The archaeological and literary sources show that the worship of Śiva can be traced back to the Indus civilization, that it was in vogue in the Vedic period, and that it prevailed in many parts of India, especially in the North during the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era[305].

Aśokan inscriptions have nothing to state about Śaivism. We have earlier noted how, on the basis of the names occurring in the inscriptions on the Sāñchī *stūpas*, Bühler establishes the existence of Śaivism and Vaishṇavism even before the emergence of Buddhism and Jainism. It is a fact that we have hardly any epigraphic evidence of the pre-Gupta period, which would throw light on the nature and development of Śaivism in its early stages. But this paucity or absence of epigraphic data is fully compensated by a large number of coins and a few seals discovered mostly in the northern and central parts of India.

According to Banerjea[306] one of the earliest numismatic data pertaining to the worship of Śiva is found in the device on some silver punch-marked coins, which as a class typify the most ancient forms of Indian currency. On a comparison of a human figure depicted on these coins with a similar figure appearing on the Ujjain coins and some coins of a few of the early foreign rulers of northern India, he suggests that the figure stands for Śiva. As regards the Ujjain coins he states that some of them contain the anthropomorphic, theriomorphic and phallic forms of Śiva as their devices. He further states that the figure of a bull, frequently used as a device on the coins of many of the Indo Greek rulers like Apollodotus and others in Gandhāra and the Panjab, represented, in most cases, Śiva in his theriomorphic form. The earliest coins of the Audumbaras

were issued in the name of the god Mahādēva or Śiva. On some square copper coins of the Audumbaras there is the representation of a Śaiva temple characterised by a *dhvaja*, a trident and a battle-axe. These coins have been assigned to the end of the 1st century B.C. and the first half of the 1st century A.D.[307] These numismatic evidences show that the worship of Śiva prevailed in the north- western and central parts of India during the 2nd and 1st century B.C. This point is further confirmed by the two seals discovered at Taxila. One of these seals shows the figure of Śiva with a trident in the left hand and a club in the right. There is a *svastika* and *nandipada* symbol together with the legend recording the name of Śivarakshita both in Brāhmī and Kharōshṭhī of *c.* 1st century A.D. This is the earliest definite anthropomorphic representation of Śiva on seals[308]. Banerjea is inclined to identify the figure of a two- armed standing human being figuring on another seal of the same period and from the same place, with Śiva[309]. Śiva also figures on one type of the coins of the Pahlava ruler Gondopharnes[310].

The most extensive use of Śiva in his human form with or without the bull by his side was made by the great Kushāṇa emperor Wema Kadphises, and to a lesser extent by his successors, Kanishka, Huvishka and Vāsudēva. Wema Kadphises must have been a zealous convert to the worship of Śiva for, this god or his emblem, the trident or battle-axe, is the invariable device on the reverse of all his coins[311]. Śiva is one of the deities figuring on the coins of Kanishka[312], Huvishka[313] and Vāsudēva[314], who are known for their eclectical approach to religious matters.

The Reh (Fatepur District, U.P.) inscription engraved on a fragmentary *Śivaliṅga* has been palaeographically assigned to 150 B.C. by Sharma[315] who reads the name of the Indo-Greek king Menander in it. Sharma's dating and the reading of the last line of this epigraph have been rejected by Verma[316] who is inclined to date it in the 1st century B.C. and associate it with the Kushāṇa ruler Wema Kadphises. Whatever it may be, this epigraph furnishes evidence of the existence of *Śivaliṅga* as an object of worship in the post-Mauryan period.

The epigraphic, numismatic and glyptic data furnished above clearly indicate that Śaivism, like Vaishṇavism, was a fairly developed religious cult by the time of the Gupta ascendency in the North, from which period onwards inscriptions begin to throw some light on its development.

Before passing on to the epigraphs of the Gupta period we may notice here a couple of inscriptions of the post-Mauryan period. A Kharōshṭhī inscription[317], probably of the period of Wema Kadphises or his immediate predecessor, discovered at Panjtār or Salimpūr in the region of ancient Gandhāra (Peshawar District) and bearing the date 122 of an unspecified era, refers to the construction of a Śaiva sanctuary (*Śivathala*) by one Moika, the Urumuja scion. However, it may be noted that Konow is inclined to take the expression *Śivathala* in the sense of 'an auspicious ground.' This epigraph adds another piece of evidence to what we have stated on numismatic basis.

Another such record is the Allahābād Municipal Museum *Yūpa* inscription[318] which we have already discussed in connection with the revival of the Vedic religion. As noted earlier, this epigraph of the 2nd century A.D. records the performance of seven Sōma sacrifices. What is presently relevant in this record is the fact that its concluding portion seems to refer to a *sattra* attached to a Śiva temple to which a gift of a village was made, and that the last line expresses the hope that Mahēśvara may be pleased *(prītimiyān=mahēśvara iti)*. This epigraph indicates that the zeal of the supporters of the Vedic religion did not hamper the progress of Śaivism in the post-Mauryan period. In fact Śaivism, like Vaishṇavism, gained the support of even the champions of the sacrificial cult.

Like Vaishṇavism, Śaivism too prospered in the Gupta period. Although not following Śaivism, the Gupta rulers were liberal supporters of this religion as known from the epigraphs and sculptures of this period. The earliest reference to Śiva in the Gupta records is found in the Allahābād pillar inscription[319] of Samudragupta. Here the fame of the emperor is compared with the pure water of Gaṅgā rushing out from the confinement in the matted hair of Paśupati *(punāti bhuvana-trayaṁ Paśupatēr= jjaṭ=āntar-guhā-nirōdha-parimōksha-śighram=iva pāṇḍu Gāngam payaḥ,* Text, l.31). It is this reference to Śiva which enables Banerji[320] to hold that Harishēṇa, the composer of the Allahābād *praśasti* was probably a Śaiva.

The Mathurā pilaster inscription[321] of Chandragupta II, dated in the year 61, is a very important record for the history of Śaivism. This epigraph records the installation of two *Śivaliṅgas* named Upamitēśvara and Kapilēśvara, by one *Ārya* Uditāchārya who was the tenth (in apostolic succession) from *Bhagavat* Kuśika and fourth from *Bhagavat* Parāśara, and who was a *praśishya* (disciple's disciple) of *Bhagavat* Upamita, and a *śishya* of *Bhagavat* Kapila, in the *Gurvāyatana* (teacher's shrine), to commemorate his two immediate predecessors, Kapila and Upamita. It is stated in this record that it was engraved as a beseechment to the Māhēśvaras (another name for the Pāśupatas) and as an address to the contemporary *Āchāryas* of the order. The last line of this record reads : *Jayati cha bhagavā[ṇ=Daṇḍaḥ] rudra-daṇḍō= gra-[nā]yakō nityam,* meaning, 'And ever victorious indeed is the god Daṇḍa, who has terrifying staff and who is the foremost leader.'

It is well-known that the Pāśupata doctrine, though it is said to have been formulated by Śiva himself in the *Mahābhārata*, originated with Lakulīśa, a human teacher, who was later on regarded as an incarnation of Śiva[322]. The importance of the Mathurā inscription lies in the fact that it helps to fix the date of Lakulīśa. Though there is no direct mention of Lakulīśa in this record it has more than one indirect reference to him. With the help of the name Kuśika occurring in its fifth line *(bhagavat-Kusikād=daśamēna)*, Bhandarkar[323] fixes the period of Lakulīśa with considerable accuracy. He rightly equates this Kuśika with the first of the four immediate disciples of Lakulīśa (Kuśika, Mitra, Garga and Kaurushya) enumerated in the Purāṇas and the medieval inscriptions like the Ēkaliṅgaji

inscription, Cintra *praśasti*, etc., and argues that *Ārya* Uditāchārya was the eleventh in apostolic succession from Lakulīśa. As this spiritual teacher Udita flourished in the last quarter of the 4th century A.D. (61 + 319 = 380 A.D.), the eleventh *Āchārya* in the upward order must have flourished between 105 and 130 A.D. approximately allowing 25 years to each of the ten preceding *Āchāryas* including Lakulīśa. The reasoning is quite convincing and on its basis Lakulīśa's date can be fixed in the first half of the 2nd century A.D.

Some other interesting pieces of information gleaned by Bhandarkar from this epigraphical record are the following. The teacher's shrine *(Guruvāyatana)* denoted the place where the memorials in the form of *Śivaliṅgas* for the departed *Gurus* bearing their names as well as their portraits were enshrined. The deceased teachers mentioned in the inscription, Kuśika, Parāśara, Upamita and Kapila, are all given the divine title *bhagavat*, while the living *Āchārya* Udita is called *Ārya*, signifying that the late *Gurus*, all experts in the Pāśupata Yōga had been merged after their death into the god-head of Śiva. On the top and bottom of the inscribed pilaster are found carved respectively a trident and a standing figure of Lakulīśa. The importance of the last line where victory is invoked for the divine Daṇḍa, lies in the fact that here the divine Daṇḍa is personified to denote Lakulīśa, for the *lakuṭa* or *laguḍa* i.e., *daṇḍa* is his main emblem.

The Udayagiri Cave inscription[324] of Chandragupta II records the excavation of a cave-temple to the god Śaṁbhu (Śiva), by the order of Vīraṣēṇa Śāba who was a minister. The Karamḍāṁḍā stone inscription[325] of Kumāragupta, dated in 435-36 A.D., refers to a *liṅga* named Pṛithvīśvara installed by Pṛithvīshēṇa who was a *Mantri-Kumārāmātya* of the king. This record opens with salutations to Śiva *(Namō Mahādēvāya)*. The Tumain inscription[326] of the same kring, dated in the year 116, seems to record the construction of a temple for Śiva by a family of five brothers. Bhandarkar is inclined to restore the last letters of the last line of this record as *Pināki̇nō gṛihaṁ*[327].

These epigraphs of the Gupta rulers show that they held Śaivism in high respect though they themselves were not Śaivites. Besides these, the epigraphs of the feudatories and contemporaries of the Guptas show that Śaivism was in a prosperous state during this period.

The Vākāṭakas, who were the allies and relatives of the Guptas, supported Śaivism. Most of these rulers were *Paramamāhēśvaras*, i.e. devout worshippers of Mahēśvara or Śiva[328].

Of the Maukhari rulers, the Haṛāhā inscription[329] of Iśānavarman, dated in 554 A.D., opens with a praise of Tripurāntaka (Śiva). It records the renovation of a dilapidated Śiva temple by Sūryarvaman, son of the king Iśānavarman. It is further stated that the god Śiva in that temple was given the name of *Kshēmēśvara*. The Nāgārjuni Hill cave inscription[330] of Anantavarman, assigned to the 6th century A.D., records the installation in the cave, by Anantavarman, of an image representing Śiva in the form of Bhūtapati,

and another of his consort, Pārvatī. And in his Asirgarh copper-seal inscription, king Śarvavarman is styled *Paramamāheśvara*.

As many as three copper-plate charters[331] of the Parivrājaka king Hastin open with the invocation *Namō Mahādēvāya* and the king is styled as *Mahādēva-pādānudhyāta* in a stone inscription[332] of Śarvanātha. These references clearly indicate that Hastin was a worshipper of Śiva.

Of the other rulers of this period, the Kōsam stone image inscription[333] of *Mahārāja* Bhīmavarman, dated in the year 139, is engraved on the broken base of a sculptured standing group of Śiva and Pārvatī. It is a damaged inscription. Fleet holds that the ruler mentioned in this record was a feudatory of Skandagupta and that the inscription records the gift or installation of the sculpture, on the base of which it is engraved. He ascribes the year 139 of this record to the Gupta year. The second verse of the Chhōṭī Sādṛī inscription[334] of the Māṇvāyaṇī king Gaurī, dated in 491 A.D., refers to the Ardhanārīśvara form of Śiva. The Mandasōr stone pillar inscription[335] of Yaśōdharman opens with an invocation to Śūlapāṇi (Śiva), and in line 6 of this record Yaśōdharman boasts that he never bowed his head to any save the god Śiva (*Sthāṇor=anyattra yēna praṇati-kṛipaṇatām prāpitam n= ōttamāṅgam*). This is a clear indication that Yaśōdharman was an ardent Śaiva. Lastly, several Śaiva seals of the Gupta period have been unearthed from Bhiṭā, Rājghāṭ and other sites. These seals, mentioning Śiva by different names like Avimuktēśvara, Gabhastiśvara, Yōgēśvara and others, attest to the existence of a number of Śiva temples in North India in the Gupta period[336].

All these inscriptions and seals show that, despite their Vaishṇavite leanings, the Gupta emperors honoured Śaivism, that some of their feudatories and contemporaries were highly devoted to Śaivism, and that Śaivism enjoyed an equal status with Vaishṇavism during the Gupta period.

All the Valabhī rulers, with the exception of Dhruvasēna I, who was a *Bhāgavata*, and Dharapaṭṭa, who was a devotee of the Sun, were definitely followers of Śaivism, as evidenced from their title *Paramamāhēśvara*[337]. The seals attached to the rings of the plates of several kings of this dynasty bear the device of a bull[338]. As rightly stated by Virji[339], Śaivism was the state religion or the royal religion of the Maitrakas. But it is strange that we come across only a single inscription of this dynasty, referring to some donation made to the god Śiva. A charter[340] of Śīlāditya I, dated in the [Valabhī] Saṁvat 29, records that he made a grant of two pieces of land along with a *Yamalavāpī* for the worship and repairs to the temple of the god Mahādēva installed by a certain Harinātha. The paucity of the Śaivite grants of the Maitraka rulers has been thus explained by Virji, who writes: "But it may perhaps be that Śaivism being the royal religion, the Śaivite temples were maintained by the state from the general revenue and that no special grants were made to them"[341]. She also maintains "that some such grants may have been made to Śaivite temples and possibly were lost in the confusion that followed the downfall of the Maitraka rule"[342]. The first of these two explanations is convincing. As to the second view, it is hard to believe that only such of the copper-plate charters that contained grants to Śaivite temples would have been lost in the confusion.

Of the other rulers of the post-Gupta period, the Nirmaṇḍ copper- plate inscription[343] *of Mahāsāmanta Mahārāja* Samudrasēna, dated in the [Harsha] year 6 (612-13 A.D.), records the grant of a village, by the king, for the worship of the god Tripurāntaka or Śiva, who under the name of Mihirēśvara, had been installed by his mother Mihiralakshmī at a previously established temple of the same god under the name of Kapālēśvara. This grant together with the title *Paramamāhēśvara* (Text l.5) of Samudrasēna shows that he was a devout worshipper of Śiva.

The Muṇḍēśvarī inscription[344] of Udayasēna, dated in the [Harsha] year 30, and recording the building of a Vaishṇava *maṭha*, refers to an already existing temple of Śiva called Vinitēśvara. This record also refers to certain provisions made for another temple of Śiva called Maṇḍalēśvara. The contents of this inscription are not very clear. But it seems to refer to a complex of two temples of Śiva and one of Vishṇu. This is an instance of harmony between the Vaishṇavas and Śaivas.

Of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśī rulers, Śivagupta Bālārjuna, who is stated to have ruled in the first half of the 7th century[345], was an ardent devotee of Śiva. Unlike his ancestors Tīvaradēva and Harshadēva who are known to be devotees of Vishṇu, this king was a worshipper of Śiva[346]. His Mallār plates and the Lodhiā plates style him as *Paramamāhēśvara* and their seals consist of a figure of the Nandī, the emblem of Śiva. In his Sēnakapāṭ inscription he is described as a devotee of the god Śiva (*bhakti-bhāra-bhāvāti-bhāvita-Śivaḥ*). The Sirpur inscription[347] of this king opens with an adoration to Śiva (*Namaḥ Śivāya*), and records that two persons named Nāgadēva and Kēśava assigned certain funds for providing garlands of flowers for the worship of Śiva at the town of Śrīpura. The Lodhiā plates[348] record that Mahā-Śivagupta made a donation of a village to a temple of Śiva named Iśānēśvara, in response to the request of a certain Śaiva ascetic, a disciple of Pramathāchārya whose preceptor hailed from the Pañchayajña *tapōvana* in the Dvaitavana forest.

The Sēnakapāṭ inscription[349] of the time of the same king opens with an adoration to Śiva, and the first two verses of this record praise the god Bhava (Śiva) and his consort Pārvatī respectively. This epigraph records that Durgarakshita, son of Dēvarakshita, who was a great devotee of Paramēśvara or Śambhu, i.e. the god Śiva, and a servant of the king, constructed a temple of Śiva and made it over in favour of Sadāśivāchārya and his spiritual successors, together with certain lands. The second part of this record states that the Śaiva ascetics had to arrange for sacrificial ceremony (*yāga*) as well as for the initiation of people into the Śaiva faith (*dīkshā*), the exposition of the Śaiva doctrine (*Samayasya vyākhyā*) and the running of a free feeding establishment (*annasya sattram*) every year during the full-moon day of the months of Āshāḍha, Kārttika

and Māgha. Thus, these records clearly show that king Śivagupta Bālārjuna was a great devotee of Śaivism evincing deep interest in its affairs.

Hiuen Tsang depicts Harsha as a first rate devotee of Buddhism. But the epigraphic and glyptic evidence goes against Hiuen Tsang's testimony. In both the Banskhēra[350] and Madhuban[351] copper-plates Harsha is not only styled as a devout worshipper of Śiva but is also compared with this god (*Paramamāhēśvarō Mahēśvara iva sarvvasattvānukampī*). The Nālandā seal[352] also bears the same description of Harsha. Further, both the Sōnpat and Nālandā seals of this king bear, as device, the figure of a bull[353]. This evidence is enough to agree with Goyal[354] who holds that Harsha was not a Buddhist personally. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that Harsha remained a devout Śaiva despite his appreciation of and support to Buddhism as stated by the Chinese traveller. That Śaivism was in a prosperous state during Harsha's reign is shown by the account of this traveller himself. He relates that he saw three 'dēva' temples with more than five hundred professed non-Buddhists of the Pāśupata sect at Jalandhara[355], that at Ahichchhatra (?) there were over three hundred professed adherents of the other systems of Pāśupatas who worshipped Iśvara (Śiva)[356], and that at Mālava the majority of non-Buddhists belonged to this sect[357]. Further, it is important to note that according to this Chinese traveller there were splendid temples dedicated to Mahēśvara at Kānyakubja[358]. Thus, from Harsha's records and Hiuen Tsang's accounts it becomes evident that Śaivism was a popular religion in the days of Harsha.

Hence, it may be reasonably concluded that Śaivism, like Vaishṇavism, was in a prosperous state in the post-Gupta period. This was possible because of the zealous support it received from the Maitraka rulers of Valabhī, Mahā-Śivagupta Bālārjuna of the Pāṇḍava dynasty and also Harsha.

We have no means to ascertain the nature of the worship of Śiva during the period before the beginning of the Christian era. From the numismatic sources we come to know that from the beginning of the Christian era Śiva was worshipped both in his anthropomorphic and phallic forms, and that his worship in the anthropomorphic form continued up till the 7th century A.D.[359]. In the Gupta and post-Gupta periods of our study Śiva was worshipped in both these forms as can be known from the sculptural remains of these periods[360]. Inscriptions refer to Śiva by various names but they furnish no iconographical details of the object of worship they refer to, thus making it impossible to know whether it was a *liṅga* or an anthropomorphic representation of the god Śiva. A combination of the anthropomorphic and *liṅga* forms of Śiva which was popular in the Gupta period is known as *mukha-liṅga*. It is a *liṅga* with which the face of Śiva is combined[361].

An interesting feature of Śaivism of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods is the practice of erecting Śiva temples or installing *Śiva-liṅgas* in one's own name or that of one's predecessor or teacher. The *Gurvāyatana* of the Mathurā inscription of the time of

Chandragupta II, which we have discussed in detail, is the best example of this practice. Besides, there are a few other instances of this kind. In the Karamdāṁḍā inscription of Kumāragupta, the *liṅga* installed by Pṛithvīshēṇa is called Pṛithvīśvara. Similarly, the god Śiva installed by Mihiralakshmī, the mother of Samudrasēna (Nirmaṇḍ copper-plate inscription) is called Mihirēśvara.

Worship of Dēvī

Soon after their evolution, Vaishṇavism and Śaivism went on associating a number of other divinities with Śiva and Vishṇu. The concepts of *vyūha* and *avatāra* of the Vaishṇavites and the idea of the *parivāra-dēvatās* of the Śaivites, are the results of such associations aimed at the development of the Śaiva and Vaishṇava mythology. We have noted earlier that the goddess Lakshmī came to be associated with Vishṇu as his consort. Similarly, the goddess Pārvatī was conceived as the spouse of Śiva. By their association with these god-heads these goddesses too began to receive worship from the devotees either with their consorts or independently. This is also true of the minor divinities who were associated either with Śiva or with Vishṇu.

The earliest definite evidence of the worship of the Indian goddesses may be found in the Kushāṇa coins[362]. So far as the epigraphic records are concerned, the earliest reference to worship of a goddess in North India is furnished by the British Museum inscription[363] of the Kushāṇa king Kanishka, dated in the 10th year. This inscription, recording the gift of a temple (*harmya*), reads in the last line *priyatāṁ dēvī grāṁ[ena]* (May the goddess be pleased with the village). Thus, it becomes obvious that the temple mentioned in this record was erected for the goddess of the village. On the basis of the representation of the two Nāgas above the inscription, Lüders suggests that the goddess intended was a Nāgī. This inscription is said to have come from the region about Mathurā. Therefore, it may be reasonably held that the independent worship of goddesses was practised in the Mathurā region in the 1st century A.D.

Excepting this solitary instance we have no epigraphical references to the worship of goddesses in the post-Mauryan period. Epigraphs of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods have a few references to the worship of goddesses. Most of these references pertain to the worship of the divine Mothers and the goddess Durgā with different names, and a few to that of the goddess Lakshmī and local goddesses.

"The *mātaraḥ* or *mātṛigaṇa*, 'the divine Mothers' are personified energies (*śakti*) of the principal deities. They are closely connected with the worship of the god Śiva. Originally they were seven in number, -Brāhmī or Brahmāṇī, Vaishṇavī, Māhēśvarī, Kaumārī, Vārāhī, Aindrī or Indrāṇī or Māhēndrī, and Chāmuṇḍā, as representing, the Pleiades, the seven mothers or nurses of Kārttikēya, the son of Śiva[364]."

The Gaṅgdhār inscription[365] of Viśvavarman, a feudatory of Kumāragupta I, records that Viśvavarman's minister Mayūrāksha erected a temple for the worship of the divine

Mothers (*Mātṛis*), "a very terrible abode (*atyuggram*) ..... filled full of female ghouls (*ḍākinīs*), who utter loud and tremendous shouts in joy, (and) who stir up the (very) oceans with the mighty wind rising from the magic rites of their religion (*tantra*)." This is an unmistakable instance of the prevalence of the Tantric worship of the divine Mothers in the Gupta period.

Another instance of the worship of the divine Mothers is found in the Dēogarh Rock inscription[366] of Svāmibhaṭa, assigned to the 6th century A.D. The first verse of this record invokes the blessing of the divine Mothers styled as the mothers of the universe (*Mātṛiṇām lōkamātṛiṇām maṇḍalam bhūtayē= stu vaḥ*). The epigraph itself purports to record the construction of an imperishable abode for the divine Mothers on the mountain on which the Dēogarh fort is situated. Sahni[367] identifies this abode of the divine Mothers with the niche in which the group of the seven Mothers and the inscription are engraved. This and the previous epigraph together tend to show that the building of the temples for the worship of the divine Mothers was common in the Gupta period.

The first part of the Bihar stone pillar inscription[368] of Budhagupta records the erection of a circle of shrines of Bhadrāryā and other deities and in front thereof a sacrificial post (*yūpa*). The second part records a grant to this temple of Bhadrāryā. From the mention of Skanda and divine Mothers, in line 9 (*Skanda-pradhānair= bhuvi mātṛibhiś=cha*), Bhandarkar states that the first part of the inscription seems to have belonged to the Śākta or Tāntrika form of worship, with Bhadrāryā as the predominant goddess[369]. He also suggests that the *yūpa*, which is stated in this record to have been installed in front of the temple, was meant for offering an animal sacrifice to the Mothers[370].

Earlier in this chapter itself we have stated that the Kōsam inscription[371] of *Mahārāja* Bhīmavarman, dated in 458-59 A.D., records the gift or installation of sculptured standing group of Śiva and Pārvatī, and that the Nāgārjunī Hill Cave inscription[372] of the Maukhari king Anantavarman records that he installed in the cave images of Śiva, in the form of Bhūtapati, and Pārvatī, under the name of Dēvī. As suggested by Fleet what was installed in the cave seems to be an image of the Ardhanārīśvara form of Śiva[373]. These two epigraphs furnish the instances of the worship of the goddess Pārvatī in association with the god Śiva.

There are several instances of the independent worship of the goddess Pārvatī in the Gupta and post-Gupta inscriptions. The Chhōṭī Sādṛī inscription[374] of the Māṇvāyaṇi king Gauri, dated in 491 A.D., opens with the praise of the Dēvī who is described as the destroyer of the demons, sustainer of the worlds, and the wife of Hara, and records the building of a great temple for this goddess, by the king. Similarly, another Nāgārjunī Hill Cave inscription[375] of Maukhari Anantavarman commences with an invocation to the goddess Mahishāsuramardinī, and records the installation in the cave, by the king, of an image of the goddess Pārvatī, under the name of Kātyāyanī, and also the grant to the same goddess, under the name of Bhavānī, of a village, the name of which is lost.

Of the 7th century A.D., the Dadhimatī-Mātā (former Jodhpur State, Rajasthan) inscription[376], dated in 608 A.D., records the gift of a certain amount of money to *dēvī* Dadhimatī, by each one of a number of Brāhmaṇas who were members of a community (*gōshṭhikā*). From the well-known verse *sarva-maṅgala-māṅgalyē* etc. of the *Mārkaṇḍēya-Purāṇa*, occurring in line 11 of this record it becomes evident that the goddess Dadhimatī to whom the gifts were made is the same as the goddess Pārvatī. Incidentally, this record helps to fix the date of the *Dēvī-Māhātmya*, which is a part of the *Mārkaṇḍēya-Purāṇa* and from which the above mentioned verse *sarvamaṅgala māṅgalyē* has been quoted in this record, as prior to 608 A.D., which is the date of this record[377].

The Vasantgaḍh (former Sirohi State, Rajasthan) inscription[378] of the king Varmalāta, dated in 625 A.D., opens with two verses, the first invoking the blessings of Durgā and the second, of Kshēmāryā, who is generally supposed to be a form of Durgā (*Kshēmā* is an epithet of Durgā)[379], and records that, during the reign of the chief Rajjila, the temple of the goddess (Kshēmāryā) was caused to be built by the *gōshṭhī* at Vaṭākarasthāna. Similarly, the Sakrāī (former Jaipur State, Rajasthan) stone inscription[380] of 642-43 A.D., invokes the blessings of the goddess Chaṇḍikā in its second verse, and records the construction of a *maṇḍapa* in front of the goddess Śaṅkarā by a committee of eleven members, all of whom were bankers. Lastly, the Sāmōlī (Rajasthan) inscription[381] of the time of the Guhila king Śīlāditya, dated in 646 A.D., opens with an invocation to the goddess Chaṇḍikā, and records the founding of a temple of Araṇyavāsinī (Durgā). It becomes obvious from the invocation to the goddess Chaṇḍikā that the name Araṇyavāsinī in this record is used for the goddess Durgā.

From these instances it becomes clear that the independent worship of the goddess Pārvatī under various names like Bhadrāryā, Kshēmāryā, Kātyayanī, Bhavānī, etc., was quite popular in the Gupta and post-Gupta periods.

Like the goddess Durgā, the goddess Lakshmī, too, was a highly revered divinity in the Gupta period. This is evident from the contemporary epigraphical references to this goddess and the coins of the Gupta rulers in which her figure appears largely[382]. But, judging from the epigraphical sources, it seems that, unlike the case of the goddess Durgā, the independent worship of the goddess Lakshmī was not a regular religious feature of the Gupta period for, whereas we have quoted several instances of the independent worship of the former goddess, we have come across only a solitary instance of certain grants made for the worship of the latter. Thus, the three Khōh copper-plate charters[383] of the Uchchakalpa rulers Saṁkshōbha and Śarvanātha record the grant of certain villages for the worship of a goddess called Pishṭapurī or Pishṭapurikādēvī who may be convincingly identified with the goddess Lakshmī. In all the three records this goddess is styled as *Bhagavatī* which is a name of both the goddesses Durgā and Lakshmī[384]. Therefore, this epithet alone cannot decide whether the goddess referred to in these records is Durgā or Lakshmī. But, judging by the opening phrase of the Khōh copper-plate inscription[385] of the year 209 of *Mahārāja*

Samkshōbha, consisting of an invocation to the god Vishṇu, under the name of Vāsudēva *(Om Namō Bhagavatē Vāsudēvāya)*, the goddess Pishṭapurī, to whom a village was granted by means of this charter, can be reasonably identified with the goddess Lakshmī. In support of this identity Fleet adduces another piece of evidence that, whereas in the year 177 the village of Dhavashaṇḍikā was allotted by *Mahārāja* Jayanātha for the purposes of a temple of the god Vishṇu under the name of Bhagavat or the Divine one[386], subsequently half of this same village was set apart, by a grant of *Mahārāja* Śarvanātha, for the purposes of the goddess Pishṭapurikādēvī[387].

From the copper-plate charters of the Maitraka rulers of Valabhī we come to know of two more goddesses, *viz.*, Pāṇḍurājā and Kōṭṭammahikādēvī. The Bhamodra Mohōta plate[388] of Drōṇasiṁha, dated in 502 A.D., records the donation of a village by the king to the temple of *Bhagavatī* Pāṇḍurājā. It is not possible to identify this goddess in the absence of an invocatory passage or some such internal evidence in the charter. The terms *Bhagavatī* and *Dēvī*, used in this record with reference to the goddess, may be interpreted in their general sense in favour of both the goddesses, Durgā and Lakshmī or any other goddess. Most probably Pāṇḍurājā was a goddess conceived and popularised by the common folk. According to a record[389] of Dhruvasēna II, dated in 639-40 A.D., the temple of the goddess Kōṭṭammahikā was first built by Drōṇasiṁha in the boundary of the village Trisaṅgamaka. For some reason the royal grant to the temple was interrupted, but it was resumed and made permanent by Dhruvasēna II, as detailed in the epigraph just referred to. Like the goddess Pāṇḍurājā, Kōṭṭammahikādēvī too, seems to have been a local goddess.

These two instances show that the worship of the local goddesses also played a considerable role in the religious life of people in the Maitraka kingdom.

Sun-Worship

Though Sun-worship in India is said to have originated as early as the Neolithic period[390], so far as the epigraphs are concerned it is only from the Gupta period onwards that we come across the instances of the building of temples for and installation of images of this god.

The earliest epigraphic reference to Sun-worship in the Gupta period is found in the Jagadishpur (Bangladesh) plate[391] of the Gupta year 128 (447 A.D.) belonging to the reign of Kumāragupta I. This inscription records the allotment of some government land to some private individuals for religious purposes, on receipt of a specified amount. One of the purposes for which Bhōyila, a resident of Gulmagandhika, and two other persons jointly applied for the said land was to make provisions for *bali, charu* and *satra* at and repairs to the temple of lord Sahasraraśmi (Sun-god) at Gulmagandhika. We are informed that two *drōṇavāpas* of land purchased by Bhōyila were given in favour of Sāmbapura, which according to Sircar[392], "seems to be the name of the religious establishment in which the Sun-god was installed and

worshipped, probably so named because Sāmba, the most celebrated devotee of the Sun-god, was also worshipped in the shrine." It is further stated in this record that, out of these two *drōṇavāpas* of land, one plot measuring one *drōṇavāpa* was utilised for making a flower garden for the shrine and for creating its *talavāṭaka* (adjoining land). This record testifies to the prevalence of the worship of the Sun-god in Bengal in the Gupta period.

The Indōr copper-plate inscription[393] of Skandagupta, dated in 464-65 A.D., is an inscription of solar worship. It opens with an invocation to the Sun-god under the name Bhāskara who is described as being worshipped ritualistically (*vidhivat*) by the enlightened Brāhmaṇas *(prabuddha-manasō)*, and as the protector of mankind from mental and physical ailments, and records a perpetual endowment by a Brāhmaṇa named Dēvavishṇu, for the purpose of maintaining a lamp in the temple of the Sun at Indrapura *i.e.*, modern Indōr (Bulandshahar District, U.P.). The temple was built by two merchants of Kshatriya caste and the amount of endowment was invested at Indrapura in a guild of oil-men. The description of the Sun-god in this record as detailed above and his mention as Savitṛi (*Bhagavatē Savitrē*), are suggestive of some sort of solar sectarianism. Commenting on the involvement of the Brāhmaṇas, Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas (the guild of oil-men) in erecting a temple for and arranging for the worship of the Sun-god, Srivastava writes: "This piece of evidence is significant because here the temple construction and the solar worship by means of a lamp post probably before a solar image is done by the indigenous peoples of India Kshatriyas, Brāhmaṇas of orthodox Vedic tradition (not the lower Śākaldvīpī Brāhmaṇas) and Vaiśyas. This evidence falsifies the popular myth that Iranian Magas were solely responsible for these two traditions of the Sun-cult in ancient India. ..... Thus by the middle of the fifth century A.D. a full fledged solar sect with all the paraphernalia of a temple, image, priesthood, rites and procedures has come into vogue"[394].

Another important inscription of solar worship is Mandasōr stone inscription[395] of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman, dated in 437-38 A.D. and 473-74 A.D. The inscription opens with three verses of *maṅgala* addressed to the Sun, the first and the third of which invoke the blessings of the divinity and the second one offers obeisance to Him. The Sun-god is invoked here in a sectarian fashion. He is worshipped by the hosts of gods, Siddhas, Brāhmaṇas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras and Naras. He is worshipped for the sake of existence. He is the cause of the destruction and commencement of the universe. He grants desires to those who worship Him. Srivastava refers to similar description of the Sun-god in the Epic-Puranic literature and observes: " A perusal of these descriptions from literary works and that of the Mandasōr inscription will reveal that virtually there is no difference in the ideas of solar sectarianism as preached in these two different sets of evidence. On the other hand they corroborate each other"[396].

The Mandasōr inscription under discussion records the repairs carried out in the year 473- 74 A,D., by the guild of silk-weavers, to the temple of the Sun-god at Daśapura

(Mandasōr), which was built on a grand scale by the same guild in the year 437-38 A.D. We learn from the inscription that the guild of silk-weavers had come to Daśapura from the Lāta (South Gujarat) region. This region has been famous for Sun-temples throughout ancient period of Indian history[397]. Therefore, it is not beyond probability that the tradition of Sun-temples may have been introduced and popularised in central India by such groups from western India. Here again the indigenous names of Bhāskara and Savitri used in this epigraph hint at the Indian origin of the tradition of the Sun temple. Further, the fact that the silk-weavers constructed the Sun-temple at Daśapura in 437-38 A.D. shows that they were following the solar cult and knew the tradition of Sun-temples long before this date.

The Khōh copper-plate inscription[398] of *Mahārāja* Śarvanātha records the grant, by the king, of a village on the agreement between him and the grantees that, it was to be applied, amongst other things, for the purposes of a shrine of Vishnu and that of the Sun-god. The mention of *bali, charu, sattra, gandha, dhūpa, mālya* and *dipa*, the various temple rituals in this inscription, with reference to the Sun-god (also to Vishnu) is a clear indication of the development of a full-fledged system of Sun-worship.

The Gwalior stone inscription[399] of the time of the Hūṇa king Mihirakula opens with an invocation to the Sun-god in his aspect of day-maker and dispeller of darkness having a wheeled-chariot with horses. He dispels distress also. Srivastava states that such descriptions of the Sun-god are quite common in the Vedic as well as in the Puranic literature[400]. This inscription records the building of a temple of the Sun by a person named Mātṛichēṭa on the mountain called Gōpa, *i.e.* the hill on which the fortress of Gwalior stands. The sectarianism of the Sun-worship is hinted by the statement occurring in this record that "those who cause to be made an excellent house of the Sun, their abode is in heaven" (*yē kārayanti bhānō ..... grihapravaram tēshām vāsaḥ svarggē. ...*, Text, l.7), and that the temple would stand as long as the gods Śiva and Vishṇu would enjoy the glory.

These three records from the Madhya Pradesh region show that Sun-worship was quite popular in central India in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D.

The Shāhpur stone image inscription[401] of Ādityasēna, dated in 672- 73 A.D. is engraved on the pedestal of a standing image of the Sun. It records the installation of the image of the Sun by *Balādhikṛita* Sālapaksha, apparently in the *agrahāra* of Nālandā. The fact that a high official of the cadre of *Balādhikṛita* was interested in Sun-worship clearly indicates that the solar cult enjoyed royal patronage in Bihar in the 7th century A.D. The name of the ruling king, Ādityasēna is also significant as it may indicate leanings of his family towards the solar cult.

The Nirmand (Punjab) copper-plate inscription[402] of *Mahāsāmanta* and *Mahārāja* Samudrasēna, dated in 612-13 A.D., records the allotment of a village by the king for the purposes of the god Tripurāntaka or Śiva, who, under the name of Mihirēśvara, had

been installed by his mother Mihiralakshmi at a previously established temple of the same god under the name of Kapāleśvara. Fleet sees a combination of solar worship with the Śaiva rites in this inscription. He writes : " It is therefore a Śaiva inscription; but the occurrence of the word *mihira*, 'the sun', as the first component of the god's name, seems to indicate that, in this particular case, some form or the other of solar worship was combined with the Śaiva rites"[403]. Srivastava[404], following Fleet, holds that the cult of Mitra was mixed up with the cult of Śiva in Punjab. In this regard we would like to suggest that the mere name Mihirēśvara of the god Śiva in this record cannot indicate a combination of the cults of the Sun and Śiva, for it is obvious that the god Śiva was named Mihirēśvara because he was installed by Mihiralakshmi, the mother of the king. How this lady came to be known by the name Mihiralakshmi is not known. But, what is important is the fact that there is nothing in this record to indicate that either this lady or her son Samudrasēna was a Sun-worshipper.

It is well-known that the Maitraka rulers of Valabhi were staunch supporters of Śaivism. But the solar cult seems to have formed a part of the religious life in the Valabhi kingdom under this dynasty. Firstly, the very name of this dynasty , *viz.*, Maitraka, is said to have been derived from the word Mitra, the Sun-god of the Indo- Iranian tradition[405]; and the dynasty itself has been held to be identical with the Mihira clan of the Hūṇas[406] who were Sun-worshippers. Secondly in the Māliyā copper-plate inscription[407] of *Mahārāja* Dharasēna II, dated in 571-72 A.D., king Dharapaṭṭa is styled a devout worshipper of the Sun-god (*Paramādityabhakta).* Lastly, the Bhadrēniyaka grant[408] of Śīlāditya I, dated in 610-11 A.D., records that two hundred *pādāvarttas* of land in the village of Bhadrēniyaka were given by the king for the worship of the Sun-god (*Ādityadēvapāda)* established in that village. All the rituals like *snapana* (bath), *gandha* (applying sandal paste), etc., including music (*vādya-gita*) formed essential parts of the worship of this deity as mentioned in this record.

The Pushpabhūtis of Kanauj were another dynasty devoted to Sun-worship. All the four records of Harsha, *viz.*, the Banskhēra[409] and the Madhuban[410] grants, and the Sōnpat[411] and the Nālandā[412] seals, unanimously declare that Rājyavardhana, Ādityavardhana and Prabhākaravardhana, his great-grand-father, the grandfather and father respectively, were all devout worshippers of the Sun-god (*paramādityabhaktas*). In this back-ground the names Ādityavardhana and Prabhākaravardhana appear quite significant. We have earlier shown how Harsha was a Śaiva despite his special interest in the affairs of Buddhism as stated by Hiuen Tsang. That Harsha was a worshipper of the Sun-god too, is attested to by the accounts of the same Chinese pilgrim[413]. Further, it is known from Bāṇa's works that after bath it was customary to offer worship to the Sun, and that the people of Ujjayini were devoted to the Sun[414]. Thus, the epigraphic, glyptic and literary sources referred to above clearly indicate that Sun-worship was an important aspect of the religious life of people under the rule of Harsha.

Another dynasty to support the solar cult was that of the Gurjaras of Gujarat. From the two Kaira plates of Dadda II, dated in 629 A.D.[415] and 634 A.D.[416], and the Saṅkhēḍā plate[417] of 641 A.D., we come to know that both Dadda I and his grandson Dadda II were devoted to the Sun-god. The last mentioned record styles another ruler of this dynasty, *viz.*, Raṇagraha also as a devout worshipper of the Sun-god (*Dinakara-kiran-ābhyarchchana-rata*, Text, l.9). The patronage of Dadda I to the Sun-cult is also confirmed by the Saṅkhēḍā plates[418] of 642 A.D. It becomes evident from the plate of 629 A.D., referred to above, that Dadda I inherited devotion to the Sun-god as his family tradition (*Nāga-kula-santatir=utpattita ēva dinakara-charaṇa-kamala-praṇām-āpanīt-āśēsha-durita nivahaḥ Sāmanta-Daddaḥ*, Text, l.4). However, it is said that the later kings of the early Gurjaras from Dadda III onwards became devotees of Śiva but continued to be favourable to the Sun-god[419].

From the above survey of the epigraphical references to the Sun-worship it becomes evident that the solar cult was an important feature of the religious life of North India during the Gupta and the post-Gupta periods, and it was next in importance only to Śaivism and Vaishṇavism.

Worship of Kārttikēya

Skanda-Kārttikēya is one of the most fascinating deities of the Brahmanical pantheon. The antiquity of the worship of this deity may be traced back to a period earlier to Patañjali (1st century B.C.)[420]. The numismatic sources show that Kārttikēya was worshipped right from the beginning of the Christian era. The cock symbol of this deity is found depicted on the coins of local kings of Ayōdhyā who ruled about the 1st century A.D.[421] Kārttikēya appears in human form on the coins of the Yaudhēyas, belonging to the 2nd century A.D.[422] The Kushāṇa king Huvishka had this god reproduced under various names, such as Skanda, Kumāra, Viśākha and Mahāsēna, on the reverse side of some of his coins[423]. From an inscribed terracotta seal of the 3rd or 4th century A.D., found at Bhiṭā we come to know that *Mahārāja* Gautamiputra Vrishadhvaja, had made over his kingdom to the great Lord Kārttikēya (*Mahēśvara-Mahāsēn- ātisṛisht-rājyasya*)[424].

Now to turn to a few epigraphic references to the worship of Kārttikēya which we have, if Lüders' view[425] that the names Sāmidata, Samika and Samikā, occurring in the Sāñchi *stūpa* inscriptions, are all derived from the epithet *svāmi* of the god Kārttikēya is accepted, it may be reasonably held that the god Kārttikēya was worshipped in the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. However, the earliest direct reference to the worship of Kārttikēya occurs in the Abbottabad (West Pakistan) inscription[426] of the time of Kadambēśvaradāsa, assigned, on palaeographical grounds, to the 3rd century A.D. It records the erection of a *Kumāra-sthāna*, which appears to mean a temple of the god Kārttikēya, by the Gaśūra Shāphara, son of Maka. Both the names Maka and Shāphara, are apparently of foreign origin. Thus, we have in this inscription an instance of a foreigner devoted to the worship of Kārttikēya in the 3rd century A.D.

Of the Imperial Gupta rulers, Kumāragupta was an ardent devotee of the god Kārttikēya. This is proved by the facts that he bore the name of this god (Kumāra), that he issued a new type of gold coins depicting Kārttikēya riding on a peacock on one side and the king feeding a peacock on the other, and also that he substituted the peacock for Garuḍa on the silver coins[427]. His devotion to Kārttikēya is further confirmed by the Bilsad stone pillar inscription[428] of his reign, dated in 415-16 A.D. This epigraph records the construction of a *pratōlī* or 'gateway' and the establishment of a charitable hall (*sattra*), at a temple of the god Svāmi-Mahāsēna (*Kārttikēya*), by a certain Dhruvaśarman.

Another instance of the worship of the god Kārttikēya is furnished by the Sohāwal copper-plate inscription[429] of *Mahārāja* Śarvanātha of the Uchchakalpa family, dated in 510-11 A.D. It records the grant by the king, of the village Vaiśyavāṭaka as an *agrahāra*, to Viśākhadatta and Śakti, sons of Khātanā of Uttarāpatha, for the purpose of Lord Kārttikēya, established by the king himself (*svapratishṭhāpitaka*). The mention of *khanda-sphuṭitapratisaṁskaraṇa* (repairs to whatever may be worn out or broken) in this record clearly indicates that the god Kārttikēya was installed by the king in a temple specially built for this purpose. The names of the donees of this charter, *viz.*, Viśākhadatta and Śakti, appear quite significant when construed with its object, for we know that the first component of the first name *i.e.* Viśākha is another name of the god Kārttikēya[430] and Śakti is the name of the weapon held by this god (*cf.* Śaktidhara)[431].

Thus, the numismatic, glyptic and the epigraphical evidences show that the worship of the god Kārttikēya can be traced back to the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. and that it was in vogue in the post-Mauryan and Gupta periods, of course, as a minor religious sect. We have not come across epigraphical references to the worship of this divinity in the post-Gupta period of our study.

The Nāga Cult

It is said that serpent worship was prevalent originally perhaps among the pre-Aryan people of India and came to be associated also with Aryanism as early as the Vedic *Saṁhitās*. As early as the Mohenjodaro civilization serpents are said to be associated with the religious beliefs of the people[432]. Serpent is a frequent device on punch-marked coins[433] (600 B.C. to 300 B.C.). It was commonly depicted on the reverse of the coins of Ayōdhyā rulers like Viśākhadēva, Dhanadēva and Naradatta[434] (2nd century B.C.) Further, snake symbols occur on the tribal coins of the Mālavas[435] and Yaudhēyas[436], and on those from Kauśāmbī[437] of the post-Mauryan period. The accounts of the Greek writers bear testimony to the prevalence of Nāga worship in India in the 4th century B.C.[438]

With this much information in the background we may now proceed to see what the epigraphs have to state on this subject. We have earlier noted how the Śaiva and Vaishṇava names of the donors occurring in the Sāñchi *stūpa* inscriptions prove the existence of these religions in the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. If the same logic is applied to the scores of names derived from the word *nāga* such as Nāgila, Nāgapiya,

Nāgarakhita, Nāga, Nāgadatā and Nāgāpalitā (Nāgapālitā), also occurring in the Sāñchi *stūpa* inscriptions[439], it may be reasonably held that the antiquity of the Nāga cult may be traced back to the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. on the basis of the epigraphic sources alone. Similar evidence is adduced by the contemporary or slightly later epigraphs[440] of the Bhārhut *stūpa* for, here too we come across a few names like Nāgadeva, Nāgadevā and Nāgarakhita, which are derived from the word *nāga*. Besides, Nāgarāja Erapata[441] and Nāgarāja Chakavāka[442] are mentioned in three of these epigraphs. Thus, these names occurring in the epigraphs from Sāñchi and Bhārhut are clear indications of the prevalence of serpent worship in North India during the post-Mauryan period.

Now we may discuss such of the epigraphs as have a direct reference to the Nāga cult. A Kharōshṭhi inscription[443] from Swat, assigned to the 1st century A.D. on palaeographical grounds, records that a tank was caused to be made for the worship of all the Nāgas by Thera Nora, son of Dati. Thera Nora seems to have been a Greek living in the Gandhāra region where the inscription has been found, according to Banerji[444]. This scholar further states: "The term 'Thera' denotes perhaps "Sthavira", a well known Buddhist title. If this is accepted we find here an important instance of the close association of Buddhism with the Nāga cult"[445].

Mathurā seems to have been an important centre of the Nāga cult since early times. The Mathurā Museum Nāga figure inscription[446], dated in the year 8 of the Kushāṇa era (86 A.D.), records the erection of a tank and a garden in honour of the *Bhagavat* Svāmi Nāga. The Nāga is represented standing with two Nāgās (female serpents) on either side, and below these figures there are twelve standing human figures, obviously worshippers as some of them are standing with their hands folded (see *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVII, plate facing p. 10).

We have earlier noted in this chapter that the goddess for whom a temple was erected, as recorded in the British Museum stone inscription[447] of the time of Kanishka, was probably a Nāgi. This is indicated by the representation of a Nāga and his wife seated above the inscription. It may be noted that, on the basis of the characters, the language and the date of the inscription, Lüders holds that it comes from Northern India. It is not unlikely that it may have originally belonged to Mathurā wherefrom a number of both inscribed and uninscribed Nāga sculptures have been discovered.

An important Nāga inscription[448] from Mathurā is the one engraved on a large sand stone slab and dated in the year 26, and palaeographically assignable to the Kushāṇa period. It records that a stone slab was set up in the place sacred to the Lord of Nāgas, Dadhikarṇa, by the sons of the well known actors of Mathurā, known as the Chāndaka brothers. This inscription clearly states that Nāgēndra Dadhikarṇa had a sanctuary set up for himself. This fact is confirmed by another inscription[449], also from Mathurā. This inscription, engraved on the base of a pillar and dated in the year 77, records the dedication (of the pillar) by Devila, the servant or priest of the temple of Dadhikarṇa. "As regards

Dadhikarṇa", Bühler writes, "his name occurs in Harivaṁśa, where he is invoked in the *āhnika mantra*, the daily prayer which is said to have been recited originally by Baladēva and after him by Krishṇa. It thus appears that the worship of Dadhikarṇa certainly formed part of the Bhāgavata ritual and was practised at Mathurā in early times[450]."

Another interesting inscription[451] from Mathurā, engraved on a Nāga image, dated in the 40th year of the reign of Huvishka, records the setting up of the image at a water tank. It concludes with the prayer, "May the Nāga deity be pleased" (*Priyyati Bhagavā Nāgō*).

These epigraphs belonging to the Kushāṇa period clearly indicate that the Nāga cult flourished in and around Mathurā side by side with Buddhism and Jainism.

The Mathurā Museum inscription[452] on the base of a fragmentary Nāga image, palaeographically assigned to the 3rd century A.D., records the gift (of the image) by Aśvadēva, the son of Bhuvana, the *Tripravaraka*. The gift of a Nāga image by an orthodox Brahmāṇa (having three *pravaras)* suggests that Nāga worship was closely associated with orthodox Brahmanism.

An inscription[453] in Gupta characters, engraved on the base of a Nāga statue in the Lucknow Museum, records the gift (of the image) by Vishṇu, son of Gōmindra and grandson of Hastadatta. Vogel thinks that this image may represent Dadhikarṇa and may have originally belonged to Mathurā.

Besides Mathurā, Rājgir was another centre of Nāga cult. The excavations at Rājgir have turned up some fragments of stones sculptured with Nāga figures[454]. Below the figure of a Nāgi there is an inscription which reads: *Bhaginī Sumāgadhī*. The pedestal of a panel of standing Nāgas has an indistinct inscription. A broken panel of standing figures has an inscription suggesting that a certain king pleased Maṇi-Nāga. It is to be noted that these inscriptions belong to the Kushāṇa period and the sculptural panels are in spotted red sand stone of Mathurā. Commenting on these panels Nazim writes thus: "The sculpture further indicates the prevalence of Nāga worship, of which Mathurā was an important centre. The finding of the name Maṇi-Nāga in the Maniyar Matha area is interesting and the words *Bhaginī Sumāgadhī*, probably designating the Nāgi, remind one of the Yaksha names *Sudasana* and *Supavāsa* occurring on the Bharhut stones. It appears that like the Yakshas, the Nāgas too had individual names in popular mythology"[455].

We have not come across epigraphical references of the Gupta period referring to serpent worship. Nor do the coins and seals of this period seem to throw any light on the cult of Nāga. Therefore, it may be reasonably held that the Nāga cult, which played a role in the religious life of the post-Mauryan period, lost its importance in the wake of the revival of the Brahmanical religions which is the key note of the religious conditions of the Gupta period. However, mention of a Nāga ruling family in a recently discovered inscription[456] from Vidiśā, assignable to the 5th century A.D., and the occurrence of a number of names like Nāgabhaṭṭa, Nāgadatta, etc. in the epigraphs of this period[457] prove that Nāga-worship had not died out during this period.

The Nāga cult does not seem to have exerted any influence even during the post-Gupta period of our study. However, its existence in Orissa during the 7th century A.D. is attested to by two epigraphs from this region. These are two copper-plate inscriptions discovered in an ancient *Maṭha* at the village of Kanās in the Puri District of Orissa. One of these plates[458] is dated in 599-600 A.D. and refers to the reign of the Tōsalı ruler Lokavigraha-bhaṭṭāraka. It records the grant of a village by the royal officers, for the purpose of instituting *bali, charu* and *sattra* at the *maṭha* of the illustrious Maṇināgēśvara-bhaṭṭāraka of Chaikāmbaka or Ekāmbaka and for maintaining the Brāhmaṇas of different *gōtras*, who were the students of the Maitrāyaṇıya branch of the Yajurvēda. The other record[459] belongs to the reign of *Mahāpratihāra-mahārāja-mahāsāmanta* Bhānudatta who is said to have flourished between 619 and 643 A.D.[460] This epigraph also records the grant of a village in favour of the Brāhmaṇas who resided in the *maṭha* of Maṇināga-bhaṭṭāraka referred to in the previous record.

These two records attest to the prevalence of the Nāga cult in Orissa in the 7th century A.D. Sircar writes thus in this regard : "That the Maṇināga cult was popular in Orissa is proved by the existence of the Maṇināga hill at Raṇpur in Orissa as well as of the goddess Maṇināga-Durgā worshipped there. Whether, however, the Maṇināgamaṭha was situated at Raṇpur cannot be determined in the present state of our knowledge. Maṇināgēśvara may also indicate a *śiva-liṅga* installed by a person named Maṇināga; but the mention of the same deity as Maṇināga-bhaṭṭāraka in the Kanās plate of Bhānudatta, edited here seems to go against such a conjecture"[461]. In this regard we would like to suggest that neither of these two plates has anything in favour of the identification of Maṇināgēśvara-bhaṭṭāraka figuring in them with the god Śiva.

Religious practices

Inscriptions of the period under study throw some light on the religious practices such as erection of temples and pillars, installation of divine images, Brahmanical rituals and worship in temples. We discuss here some of such interesting religious aspects.

Erection of the *stūpas, vihāras*, temples, images and the *yūpas* was a common feature of the religious life of ancient India. Erection of stone slabs or pillars as funeral monuments[462] or for the purpose of welfare[463] (*pushṭayē*) is also known from the epigraphs of the Kshatrapa rulers. Instances of the erection of such pillars is also seen in a few epigraphs of the Gupta period[464]. But, the erection of pillars known as the *dhvajastambhas* in honour of the god Vishṇu is a special feature found perhaps only amongst the Vaishṇavites. We have come across three clear instances of such pillars in the epigraphs belonging to the period of our study. The earliest instance is found in the Besnagar pillar inscription[465] of Heliodoros of the 2nd century B.C., discussed earlier in this chapter. This inscription records the erection of a column, which is termed *Garuḍadhvaja*, in honour of the god Vāsudēva. The other two instances belong to the Gupta period. The Meharauli iron pillar erected by Chandra (Chandragupta II) is called a *dhvaja*, or 'standard', of the god Vishṇu (*Vishṇōr=dhvajaḥ*), in

the epigraph[466] engraved on it. Similarly, the Ēraṇ stone pillar erected by *Mahārāja* Mātrivishṇu during the reign of Budhagupta is called a *dhvajastambha* (flag-staff) of Bhagavān Janārdana (Vishṇu), in the inscription[467] engraved on it. In the light of the fact that in none of these instances there is any reference either to a temple or an image of the god Vishṇu it becomes clear that these pillars themselves represented the god Vishṇu and received worship from the devotees, though this is not so stated in the inscriptions. We are highlighting this feature because such a phenomenon is not met with in the other religious sects, both orthodox and heterodox.

We have earlier noted in this chapter that the *śivaliṅgas* that were installed were named after the persons responsible for their installation or the persons for whose religious merit they were installed. It is to be noted in this connection that this practice was in vogue only among the Śaivas, that too with reference perhaps only to the *liṅgas*. We have not come across an instance of a Vaishṇavite image being named after the person responsible for its installation. However, the Bhitarı stone inscription[468] of Skandagupta seems to be an exception to what we have stated. According to Bhandarkar[469], the image of Vishṇu installed by Skandagupta for the spiritual merit of his father Kumāragupta I was perhaps named Kumārasvāmin. However, this view is based on the conjectural restoration of the relevant damaged portion of the epigraph, and as such cannot be taken for granted.

We have come across three interesting instances of naming a deity after the place of its installation. Thus, the god Narasiṁha, an incarnation of Vishṇu, carved on the rock of the Narasiṁha cave on the top of the Mandār Hill is called as Virajōguhāsvāmin in the inscription[470] inside the cave. The name Virajōguhāsvāmin of the god Narasiṁha is obviously due to his residence, *viz.*, the cave which must have existed well before the erection of the image of Narasiṁha and must have been known as Virajōguhā. For, the word *virajas* does not denote the god Narasiṁha.

A similar instance is found in the three copper-plate inscriptions[471] of the Uchchakalpa rulers. All the three epigraphs belong to the 6th century A.D., and record grant of certain villages to a goddess called Pishṭapurı or Pishṭapurikādēvı. According to one of these records[472] the temple of this goddess was situated at the town of Mānapura (*Mānapurē kāritakadēvakul[ē*] bhagavatyāḥ Pishṭapurikā-dēvyāḥ*, Text, l.11). Judging from the name Pishṭapurı or Pishṭapurikā of the goddess, it is reasonable to hold that this goddess was originally associated with a town named Pishṭapura. This same view is expressed by Fleet who writes: "The Pishṭapurı of this inscription must be a local form of some more famous and original goddess at Pishṭapura itself"[473]. Thus, here is an instance of a goddess losing her proper name and being called after the name of the place to which she originally belonged.

Lastly, an epigraph[474] of the time of the Guhila ruler Śīlāditya, dated in 646 A.D., records the founding of a temple of a goddess called Araṇyavāsinı. It is not difficult to

learn from the epigraph that this goddess was named Araṇyavāsinī because her temple was erected in a hilly forest locality called Araṇyakūpagiri where a mine (*āgara* = Skt. *ākara*) was started by a community that had migrated from Vaṭanagara. But for the invocatory verses in the beginning of this record it would have been impossible to identify the goddess Araṇyavāsinī figuring therein with Durgā. Here we have an instance of a goddess being named after the geographical features of the locality in which she was installed.

These three instances show how the popular element played a role in the religious matters.

An important aspect of the religious life of the Brāhmaṇas of ancient India consisted of the 'Five Great Sacrifices' (*Pañcha- mahāyajñas*). Manu[475] enjoins the performance of these sacrifices by the house-holders. These sacrifices as mentioned in the inscriptions are *bali, charu, vaiśvadēva, agnihōtra* and *atithi*[476], respectively meaning, 'the offering of a portion of the daily meal to all creatures', 'the oblation to the gods and manes', 'the offering to the Viśvēdēvas', 'the maintenance of the sacred fire and offering oblation to it' and 'hospitality to guests'[477]. The last mentioned sacrifice, *viz., atithi* is generally called *sattra* in the inscriptions, and denotes a wider sense of charity or alms-giving.

We come across a number of epigraphical references to the *Pañcha-mahāyajñas* from the Gupta period. But, we have only one or two references to show that these sacrifices were performed even in the post-Mauryan period. Thus, a fragmentary Mathurā inscription of the reign of the Kushāṇa king Huvishka, recording the renovation of the shrine raised in the memory of the grandfather of Huvishka states that part of the administration of the benefaction was assigned to the Brāhmaṇas who were *naityik-ātithis*, that is, who performed the *Atithi-Yajna* daily[478]. Another Mathurā epigraph[479] of the time of the same ruler records arrangements made for feeding one hundred Brāhmaṇas daily and providing food items to the poor. Thus, it becomes evident that at least one of the Five Great Sacrifices was performed in the post-Mauryan period. Though the two instances quoted above pertain to the feeding arrangements made on a large scale by rich persons, it is probable that the Brāhmaṇas of this period performed the *sattra* and the four other sacrifices to the extent they could afford.

Most of the land grants made to the Brāhmaṇas in the Gupta and post-Gupta periods were meant to defray the expenses of these five sacrifices performed by them. The names of all the five sacrifices are found mentioned in one epigraph[480] only. Certain other records refer to them by the collective term *Pañcha-mahāyajña*. But the majority of the records mention only *bali, charu* and *sattra*. Therefore, it seems probable that these three were viewed as the most important of the Five Great Sacrifices. From the mention of these sacrifices with reference to both individual Brāhmaṇas and temples it becomes clear that they were performed both in individual capacity by Brāhmaṇas and as part of temple rituals.

Temples have played a vital role in the religious life of the people of this country. As centres of religious activities they have been attracting and inspiring the faithful. Right from the day of the conception of an abode for the god, temples have become an inseparable part of day-to-day religious life. Though the origin of the Hindu temple can be traced back to quite an early period, epigraphical references to temples are available only from the post- Mauryan period, and it is only from the Gupta period onwards that we come across epigraphical references to temple rituals.

From the epigraphs of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods we come to know that, like human beings, the gods too enjoyed a luxurious life. Inscriptions mention the various types of offerings made to the divine images installed in temples as part of their worship. The worship consisted of bathing and anointing the deity followed by the offering of flowers, lamps, food items, etc. The word *pūjā* occurs in an epigraph[481] in the general sense of worship. The ordinary bathing with water is known as *snapana*[482]. A special bath with curds, milk and ghee is called *dadhi-kshīra-ghṛita-snapana*[483]. The bathing ceremony was followed by that of cleansing the deity (*sanmārjjana*)[484]. The next item was the besmearing of the deity with perfumatory unguents (*upalēpana*)[485]. This ceremony is generally known as *gandha*[486] in inscriptions. Since the word *gandha* also denotes sandal wood it may be held that sandal paste was generally used for besmearing the deity as is done in the present day. In this connection we may note that sandal paste was used in the Gupta period to ease the warmth caused by the rays of the sun[487]. Another unguent used in the worship was Amyirs Agallocha (*aguru*)[488]. Then there was the offering of incense (*dhūpa*)[489] to the deity. Offering of flowers to the deity is variously called *pushpa*[490], *pushpārchana*[491], *mālya*[492] or *pushpamālya*[493]. Here we may note that the Sirpur stone inscription[494] of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśi king Śivagupta mentions four garlands of flowers, of the height of a man (*purusha-pramāṇaṁ kusuma-srak-chatushṭayaṁ*, Text, ll.14-15) that were offered to the god Śiva. Further, in the Tipperah copper-plate grant[495] of Lōkanātha, dated in 650 A.D., there is a reference to a special kind of offering of flowers called *ashṭapushpikā* to Lord Ananta Nārāyaṇa. This expression also occurs and twice in the *Harshacharita*[496] of Bāṇa. Here, in both the contexts this word occurs with reference to the god Śiva. The commentator Śaṅkara does not name the eight flowers used in the *ashṭapushpikā*. He simply states that eight flowers were used in this offering (*ashṭau pushpāṇy-ēv=āshṭapushpikā*)[497]. However, from the context in which the expression *ashṭapushpikā* occurs for the first time in this work it becomes evident that this offering was associated with the eight forms of Śiva (*ashṭamūrtti*). The significance of *ashṭapushpikā* with reference to Lord Ananta-Nārāyaṇa cannot be known in the absence of any suggestion in the epigraph referred to above. However, this much is obvious that eight flowers or more probably, eight kinds of flowers were meant by the expression *ashṭapushpikā*.

Of the remaining itmes, *dīpa*[498] was the oil lamp that lit the divine image. Then there is the word *taila* occurring in the list of the temple rituals. This word has been rendered

by scholars as 'oil'[499] in its literal sense. In such a rendering the word *taila* is obviously treated separately without reference to the word *dīpa* preceding it. In such cases the word *taila* has to be necessarily explained as something like *taila-snāna* or *taila-lēpana*. But, it seems more reasonable to take the words *dīpa* and *taila* together to mean lamp-oil, *i.e.*, oil for lamp, as has been done by Banerji[500]. In this connection it may be noted that wherever the terms *dīpa* and *taila* occur in the list of temple rituals the first term precedes the second one[501], and that while the word *dīpa* occurs independently in the context under discussion[502] the word *taila* does not.

Lastly, among the food items, *gavya* (cow's milk) and *madhuparka* (a mixture of honey) are mentioned in a Dāmōdarpur record[503]. We have already noted that *bali*, *charu* and *sattra* were also conducted in the temples.

We have come across epigrphical references to the procession with idols (*dēvadrōṇī*)[504] and to an official in the charge of this service (*Dēvadrōṇy-adhikṛita*)[505]. These references presuppose the existence of portable images of the deities wrought in metal specially for the purpose of procession. It is interesting to note that music, both vocal (*gīta*) and instrumental (*vādya*), and dance (*nṛitya*) formed part of temple rituals[506].

Epigraphs also refer to temple attendants. Though we have not come across references to temple rituals of the pre-Gupta period there are references to temple attendants of this period. Thus, the terms *Pādamūlikā*[507], *Dēvakulika*[508] and *Dēvadāsī*[509], all denoting temple attendants, are met with in the post-Mauryan period. In the epigraphs of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods the temple-attendants are called *Pādamūla*[510], *Dēvaparichāraka*[511], *Dāsa* and *Dāsī*[512]. *Dēvikarmāntika*[513] and *Dēvavārika*[514] were obviously officials incharge of the estates assigned to the deities, for the signature of the first one finds place in the charter by means of which a village was granted to a goddess, and the second one is mentioned among the officials that were addressed by a king in connection with the grant of a village to certain Brāhmaṇas.

An earlier noted 7th century record[515] refers to a temple of the goddess Araṇyavāsinī (*Durgā*) in Rajasthan, which had on its rolls as many as eighteen bards (*Vaitālikas*), hailing from different parts of the country (*nānā-dig-dēś-āgat-āshṭādaśa-vaitālika-lōka-vikhyātaṁ*, Text, l.7).

We have come across two instances of committees (*goshṭhī*) that were responsible for the construction of temples. In one instance[516] a temple of the goddess Kshēmāryā was caused to be made by a *gōshṭhī* at Vaṭākarasthāna (Rajasthan) in 625 A.D. In the second instance[517] a *gōshṭhī* composed of eleven members, all of whom were merchants or bankers, as can be known from the epithets *śrēshṭhī* and *vaṇik* applied to some of their names, constructed a *maṇḍapa* in front of the goddess Śaṅkarā at the village of Sakrāī in Rajasthan in 642-43 A.D. From the language of this epigraph (*Tair=ayaṁ gōshṭhikair=bhūtvā .... kāritaḥ .....*, Text, l.7) it becomes clear that the bankers had formed a committee with the sole purpose of erecting the said *maṇḍapa*.

From the mention of the repairs to the temple (*khaṇḍa-sphuṭita- pratisaṁskaraṇa*), in almost all records making land grants to the temples for the maintenance of the various rituals discussed above, it becomes evident that periodical repairs to the temples were carried out regularly for their preservation.

Lastly, we have to note that the offering of *dhūpa, dīpa, gandha*, etc., which we have discussed above, was not an exclusive feature of the worship of the Hindu deities. This practice was also in vogue among the Buddhists and Jainas. Thus, the two fragmentary charters[518] of the Maitraka king Dharasēna IV mention *pūjā, snapana, gandha, pushpa, dhūpa* and *dīpataila* with reference to the Buddhist goddess Tārādēvī, and the Pāhārpur copper-plate inscription[519] of 479 A.D. mentions *gandha, dhūpa, sumana* and *dīpa* with reference to the worship of the *arhats* at the *vihāra* of Vaṭa-Gōhālī. These instances clearly show how the different religious sects, flourishing side by side, influenced each other in the sphere of religious practices despite their divergent dogmatic principles.

Tolerance

The religious conditions of ancient India deserve to be qualified by three terms, *viz.*, tolerance, eclecticism and freedom. By tolerance we mean the wholesome tendency to allow all the religious sects to grow irrespective of what religious sect one is personally devoted to. Eclecticism is the quality to appreciate and adopt the good points of all the religious sects. And freedom is the free choice to be devoted to whatever religious sect or deity one likes without affecting one's own social or political status.

The ancient Indian ruling dynasties had thoroughly imbibed these qualities and the examples set by the rulers must have been scrupulously emulated by their subjects. Aśoka's policy of tolerance is too well known. Inspite of his staunch devotion to Buddhism he held the Brāhmaṇas. Śramaṇas and the Ājīvikas in high respect, and erected dwellings for the monks of the last mentioned sect. It is true that he prohibited the killing of animals even for the sacrificial purpose. But, this he seems to have done out of compassion to all living creatures and not with an intention to antagonise the Vedic sacrificial cult. His tolerance and eclecticism are best illustrated in R.E. XII[520] where he declares that he honours men of all creeds, and advises his subjects to honour their own creed and those of others for any good point in them, and not to blame them. According to him this is the way to exalt one's own creed and benefit other creeds. Perhaps, there cannot be a better practical advice conducive to a harmonious life of any region and time.

Even though certain Buddhist texts call Pushyamitra Śuṅga a persecutor of Buddhism, the great *stūpa* at Bhārhut and the gate-way railings surrounding the Sānchī *stūpas*, which were erected during the reign of the Śuṅgas, stand even to this day as monuments of religious tolerance of this dynasty. Khāravela of Kaliṅga was another magnanimous ruler of this period. He was an ardent devotee of Jainism. But his titles *savapāsaṇḍapūjaka* (respector of every sect) and *savadēvāyatana-saṁkhāraka* (the repairer of all temples) mentioned in line 17 of the Hāthigumphā inscription[521] bear witness to his sense of

tolerance and liberality in religious matters. It has been rightly stated by Barua[522] that so far as this world was concerned Khāravela was a Hindu, and that so far as the other world was concerned, he was a pious Jaina.

We have already noted that all the three important religious sects of the time, *viz.*, Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism prospered under the Kushāṇa rulers. Their eclecticism, as evidenced from their coins, is a well known fact of the religious history of ancient India. An interesting feature of ancient Indian religious life is the fact that no ruler was bound to follow the religion of his predecessors. Rulers were free to adopt and practise the religious sect of their choice. Thus, the Kushāṇa rulers Kanishka and Huvishka were the followers of Buddhism, but the next ruler Vāsudēva seems to have adopted Bhāgavatism as indicated by his name.

The very fact that Buddhism and Jainism flourished in the Gupta period despite the overwhelming influence of the revival of Brahmanical religion, is a clear proof of the generous religious policy of the rulers of this dynasty. We have already referred to the inscriptions recording the benefactions of the different rulers of this dynasty to Buddhism and Jainism. However, we may refer here to a recently discovered inscription of the reign of Budhagupta. This epigraph[523] found in the outskirts of Mathurā is dated in 480-81 A.D., and it records the installation of a set of four Buddha images for the sake of religious merit by Śaṅkhika out of devotion for the Buddha.

The Maitraka rulers of Valabhī were ardently devoted to Śaivism. But as already noted they rendered yeoman service to Buddhism. That Jainism prospered under these rulers with Valabhī as its centre is testified by the Jaina literary traditions[524].

Harshavardhana has been represented as a devout worshipper of Śiva *(Paramamāhēśvara)* in his epigraphic and glyptic records. But his patronage to Buddhism as narrated by Hiuen Tsang is a well known fact of Indian history. Thus, it may be reasonably held that Harsha supported both Brahmanism and Buddhism. A noteworthy point about the Pushpabhūti family to which Harsha belonged is the fact that Harsha's father, grandfather and great-grand-father were all worshippers of the Sun-god *(Paramādityabhaktas)*, his brother Rājyavardhana was a devout worshipper of Sugata *(Paramasaugata)*, and Harsha himself was a *Paramamāhēśvara*. Here is an outstanding instance of freedom of choice in religious matters.

About the Pāṇḍuvaṁśi king Śivagupta it is stated: "although king Mahā-Śivaguptarāja was a devout worshipper of Śiva (*parama- māhēśvara*), he did patronise Buddhism and was a symbol of religious toleration, being averse to no other sects. As we know from the Mallār plates, he donated a village to 'the community of venerable (Buddhist) monks' .... In his time his mother Vāsaṭā constructed a superb temple of Hari (Vishṇu) at Śrīpura ....."[525].

Lastly, the Kailān copper-plate inscription[526] of Śridhāraṇarāta (*c.* 665-75 A.D.) presents a rare, if not unique instance of the sense of mutual respect and cooperation of the Buddhists and the Brāhmaṇas. This inscription records the dedication of land jointly to

Bhagavat Tathāgataratna or Ratnatraya for the worship of the Buddha and other purposes, as well as to a number of Brāhmaṇas for the performance of their *pañcha-mahāyajña*.

We have quoted the instances of the important rulers of ancient India to show how tolerance, eclecticism, freedom of choice and generosity prevailed in the religious life of North India. It seems that the religious matters were never mixed with socio-political life of the people. It is true that royal patronage to one or the other religious sect greatly helped in its progress. But such a patronage never meant any harm to the other sects. We have not come across even a single instance of a religious feud between the followers of two different religious sects, referred to in the inscriptions of the period of our study.

Such were the religious conditions of North India during the period of our study, as depicted in the contemporary epigraphical records.

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451. *ASIAR.*, 1908-09, pp. 160-61.
452. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
453. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

454. *Ibid.*, 1936-37, p. 46.
455. M. Nazim in *Ibid.*
456. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XLI, pp. 186 ff.
457. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 328.
458. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 328 ff.
459. *Ibid.*, pp. 332 ff.
460. *Ibid.*, p. 332.
461. D.C. Sircar in *Ibid.*, pp. 330-31.
462. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 142 ff.
463. *Ibid.*, pp. 144 ff.
464. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), Nos. 32 and 43.
465. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, pp. 88-89.
466. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 12.
467. *Ibid.*, No. 39.
468. *Ibid.*, No. 31.
469. *Ibid.*, p. 314.
470. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXVI, pp. 303 ff.
471. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, Nos. 25, 29 and 31.
472. *Ibid.*, No. 31.
473. J.F. Fleet in *Ibid.*, p. 113, n. 2.
474. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XX, pp. 97 ff.
475. *Manu.*, III, 69-70.
476. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, pp. 166-67.
477. *Apte.*, pp. 695, 429, 892, 13 and 29 respectively.
478. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 138.
479. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, pp. 55 ff.
480. See No. 476 above.
481. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, p. 117.
482. *Ibid.*
483. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, p. 117.
484. *Ibid.*

485. *Ibid.*
486. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 127.
487. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 326, v. 31.
488. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, p. 79, Text, l. 48.
489. *Ibid.*, Vol. XL, p. 177.
490. *Ibid.*
491. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, p. 117.
492. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVI, p. 19.
493. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, p. 117.
494. *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 179 ff.
495. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XV, p. 311.
496. *HC.*, pp. 20 and 102-03.
497. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
498. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 127.
499. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIX, p. 131; Vol. XL, p. 177, etc.
500. R.D. Banerji in *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, p. 117.
501. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVI, p. 19; Vol. XIX, p. 129; Vol. XXI, p. 118; Vol. XL, p. 180; *JBBRAS.*, Vol. XX, p. 9.
502. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol XIII, p. 115; *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 362; *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 127.
503. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 362.
504. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
505. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIII, p. 115.
506. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXI, p. 118; Vol. XXVII, p. 324; *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. IX, p. 239.
507. *List.*, No. 1344.
508. *Ibid.*, No. 63.
509. *Ibid.*, No. 921.
510. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXVI, p. 305; *JBBRAS.*, Vol. XX. p. 9.
511. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol XL, p. 186.
512. *Ibid.*, p. 184.
513. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVI, p. 19.
514. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 212.

515. *Ibid.*, Vol. XX, pp. 97 ff.
516. *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, pp. 187 ff.
517. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 27 ff.
518. *Ibid.*, Vol XXXVIII, pp. 219 ff.
519. *Ibid.*, Vol. XX, pp. 59 ff.
520. *C.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp. 20 ff.
521. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XX, pp. 71 ff.
522. Barua quoted in *EIR.*, p. 159.
523. *IVMDEE.*, p. 10.
524. *AHS.*, pp. 117 ff.
525. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol XXVII, p. 321.
526. *Sel. Ins.*, Vol. II, pp. 36 ff.

CHAPTER VIII

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND SCRIPT

In this chapter it is proposed to discuss the different languages and scripts that were employed in the epigraphs of the period chosen for study, and to furnish a brief account of the literary style that was adopted and developed in the epigraphical field throughout this period. Our intention is to take note of the salient linguistic and palaeographical features that prevailed in the inscriptions pertaining to the different stages of the period of our concern, and not to enter into their detailed examination. So also, a literary criticism of the bulk of inscriptions that are composed in a poetic style is not intended here.

Prakrit, Mixed dialect and Sanskrit are the three languages that were used in the epigraphical records of the period of our study. The earliest inscriptions of our country, the Aśokan Edicts, are written in Prakrit dialects. In fact, they are the earliest available writings in Prakrit. The inscriptional activity started by Aśoka was continued under the later rulers, the Śuṅgas, the Indo-Greeks, the Śaka-Kshatrapas and the Kushāṇas, and Prakrit continued to be the main language of the inscriptions till the advent of the Imperial Guptas on the north Indian political scene in the first quarter of the 4th century A.D. However, the supremacy of Prakrit as epigraphical language did not last long, for as early as the 1st century A.D. Sanskrit began to exert influence on Prakrit in the field of epigraphy, and through slow and steady progress the former ultimately supplanted the latter from the Indian epigraphical writing by the 4th century A.D.

A mixture of Prakrit and Sanskrit languages, termed 'Mixed dialect', is noticed in the north Indian epigraphs of the period between the 1st century B.C. and the beginning of the 4th century A.D. This period may be properly called the transition between the end of the Prakrit and the beginning of the Sanskrit supremacy in the north Indian inscriptions. Ramesh thus generalises the linguistic features of the epigraphs of this transitional period. He writes : "From then on (i.e., from the 1st century B.C.), for as long as nearly four centuries, it was mostly a question of whether a given inscription had in its diction more of the Prakritic or more of the Sanskritic elements, the latter steadily increasing its

dominance over the former. As a matter of fact, depending upon such epigraphical diction, we can easily label the language of any given inscription belonging to this transitional period, as 'Prakrit influenced by Sanskrit' or as 'Sanskrit influenced by Prakrit"[1].

Though we have an instance of the use of unmixed Sanskrit in an epigraph of the 1st century B.C., and a few more similar records are available from the 1st century A.D. onwards, the final switch over from Prakrit to Sanskrit as the primary epigraphical medium coincided with the ascendancy of the Imperial Guptas in the north Indian political arena in the second decade of the 4th century A.D. The patronage extended by the Gupta rulers to classical Sanskrit is a well known fact. As a result of this patronage there appeared a number of Sanskrit inscriptions not only throughout the length and breadth of the vast Gupta empire, but also in its adjoining territories which came into the sphere of the cultural influence of the Guptas. From the beginning of the Gupta period till the end of the period of our study, i.e., 700 A.D., Sanskrit was the only language employed in north Indian epigraphs.

At this stage it is worthwhile to note the linguistic periodisation of the Indian inscriptions as given by Ramesh. He recognises the following periods[2] :

I.	The Prakrit Age	(4th century B.C to 2nd century B.C.)
Ia.	The Prakrit-Sanskrit Age	1st century B.C. to
Ib.	The Sanskrit-Prakrit Age	the end of the 3rd century A.D.
IIa.	The Sanskrit Age	4th century A.D. to the predominance of the different regional languages at different times.
IIb.	The Sanskrit-Vernacular Age	
III.	The Vernacular (-Sanskrit) Age	As and when inscriptions entirely composed in different regional languages make their appearance.

Brāhmı, Kharōshṭhı and Siddamātrikā are the three scripts that were employed in the inscriptions of the period under discussion. With the exception of a few records like the Sohgaurā bronze plaque and others, the Aśokan Edicts are the earliest epigraphical records of India. Aśokan inscriptions are engraved in the Brāhmı, Kharōshṭhı, Greek and Aramaic scripts, the first two being exclusively used for the writing of his Prakrit inscriptions, and the other two for writing his Greek and Aramaic inscriptions respectively. Of these we are concerned with the Brāhmı and Kharōshṭhı scripts which were employed in Mauryan India proper. Except the Fourteen Rock Edicts found at Shāhbāzgaṛhı and Mānsehrā all the Aśokan inscriptions are in the Brāhmı script.

The Brāhmı script was employed side by side with Kharōshṭhı during the reign of the north Indian rulers who succeeded the Mauryas. It underwent marked changes in the course of its career from the 3rd century B.C. to the end of the 5th century A.D.

During this period three major stages of the development of this script are generally recognised. They are, 1. The Aśokan Brāhmı, 2. The Kushāṇa Brāhmı and 3. The Gupta Brāhmı, also called the Early Brāhmı, the Middle Brāhmı and the Late Brāhmı respectively. From the 6th century onwards for about a period of four centuries the Brāhmı script gradually evolved itself into a palaeographical stage called Kuṭila or Siddhamātrikā, the latter in its turn developing into the Nāgarı and the regional scripts. Thus, Brāhmı may be rightly termed the national alphabet of India.

But unlike Brāhmı the use of the Kharōshṭhı script was restricted to a comparatively limited territory. The Kharōshṭhı script was introduced into the north-western regions (Shāhbāzgaṛhı and Mānsehrā Rock Edicts) of the subcontinent for the first time by Aśoka. In the post-Aśokan period the Kharōshṭhı alphabet was used by the Indo-Greek and the Scytho-Parthian rulers of the north-west for writing the legends on their coins. The Kushāṇas used both the Brāhmı and Kharōshṭhı scripts for their inscriptions. Kharōshṭhı continued to be more popular than Brāhmı in the north-western region even in the post-Mauryan period. This fact is attested to by the use of the Kharōshṭhı script in the Bajaur casket inscription[3] of the reign of Menander and the Swat Relic Vase inscription[4] of Theodoros. Before the 6th century A.D. the use of Kharōshṭhı died not only out of the north-western region but also out of Afghanistan. The latest Kharōshṭhı inscriptions in India are two small Taxila records of about the 5th century A.D.[5]

Prakrit

The term 'Prakrit' denotes the different spoken dialects of the common people. These dialects are said to have been evolved from Sanskrit itself. Thus, it has been stated "The old Indo-Aryan stage of the Aryan speech, as typified by the Vedic and early Sanskrit, altered imperceptibly and became transformed into middle Indo- Aryan and Prakrit"[6]. Further, it is held that "The middle Indo- Aryan languages first came into use as vehicles for teachings of Buddha and Mahavira, but the first examples recorded in writing are the inscriptions of Aśoka"[7].

On the basis of the linguistic peculiarities found in the Aśokan inscriptions, the existence of three dialects, *viz.*, the Eastern, the Western and the North-Western, have been generally recognised by scholars[8]. But Basak[9], and following him Pandey[10] treat the dialects of the Aśokan inscriptions under four heads, *viz.*, North-Western, Mid-Indian, Western and Southern. We have adopted here the classification of these latter scholars in highlighting the salient features of the dialects used in the Aśokan inscriptions.

I. **The North-Western dialect** : This dialect is found in the Shāhbāzgaṛhı and Mānsehrā Rock Edicts, and it shows the following linguistic features :

(1) No use of long vowels such as *ā, ı* etc, On this point Hultzsch observes : "the Kharōshṭhı alphabet does not mark the length of the three vowels *a,*

i, u, and we must always keep in mind that every *a, i, u*, of the text may be meant for *a* or *ā, i* or *ī u* or *ū*, respectively"[11].

(2) Dropping of the final consonant *(kichi* for Skt. *kinchit*, Mānsehrā, l.28)[12].

(3) Retention of all the three sibilants, *śa, sha* and *sa* (*priyadraśisa, oshaḍhani*, etc., Shāhbāzgaṛhi, ll.3 and 5 respectively)[13].

(4) No conjunct consonants, except mostly in cases of conjuncts with either superscript or subscript *r* (*kalaṇaṁ, dukaraṁ* = Skt. *kalyāṇaṁ, dushkaraṁ* respectively; *Devanapriyo*, Shāhbāzgaṛhi, l.11, etc.)[14].

(5) Inconsistency in marking the letter *ra* when it is combined with other consonants, the order of the symbols not conforming to the actual pronunciation, but to the convenience of the combinations (*Priyadraśi for Priyadarśi, savrapashaḍa for sarvapashaḍa*, Mānsehrā l.32, etc.)[15].

(6) Existence of cerebral *ṇ* in some words like *praṇa, aṇapitam*, (Shāhbāzgaṛhi, ll.3 and 5 respectively)[16].

(7) Frequency of the Māgadha termination *e* in case of the Nominative singular words ending in *-a* (*vivade, jane*, Shāhbāzgaṛhi, ll.14 and 21 respectively)[17].

(8) No assimilation of compound consonants.

(9) Retention of *r* (not changed to *l*) mostly.

II. **Mid-Indian dialect (Māgadha) :** This dialect has been employed in the Edicts at Bairāṭ, Delhi- Tōprā, Sārnāth and Kaliṅga, and the following are its salient features :

(1) Extensive use of *l* for *r* as in later Māgadhī Prakrit (*lāja* for *rāja, chilaṁ* for *chiraṁ* and *lajūkā* for *rajūkā*, Delhi- Tōprā, P.E. I, l.1; II, l.15 and IV, l.2 respectively)[18].

(2) Nominative singular of *akārānta* words end in *-e* (*Samāje, Devānaṁpiye, mige*, Jaugada, R.E. I, ll.2 and 4, etc.)[19].

(3) No assimilation of compound consonants.

(4) Use of *Svarabhakti* vowel as in *asinave* (= *āsnavaḥ*, Delhi- Tōprā, P.E. II, l.11)[20]; *duvālate* (= *dvārataḥ*, Dhauli, Separate R.E. I, l.3)[21]; and *alahāmi* (= *arhāmi*, Calcutta-Bairāṭ, R.E., l.4)[22], etc.

(5) Use of *hakaṁ* for *ahaṁ* as in later Māgadhī Prakrit (Dhauli, R.E. VI, ll.2 and 5[23]; Delhi-Tōprā P.E. III, l.21[24]; Calcutta-Bairāṭ, R.E., l.4[25], etc.).

(6) Use of a peculiar form *hamiyāye* for Prakrit *mamāï* (=*Skt. mayā*, Calcutta-Bairāṭ, R.E., l.3)[26].

(7) Cerebralization of the dentals after *ri* as in *kaṭe* (Dhauli, R.E. V, l.1)[27] for Skt. *kṛitaṁ; bhaṭakesu* (Delhi-Tōprā, P.E. VII, l.29)[28] for Skt. *bhṛitakēshu* and *vaḍhi* (Delhi-Tōprā P.E. VI, l.3)[29] for Skt. *vṛiddhi*, etc.

(8) The conjunct *ly* becomes *y* as in *kayāna* for Skt. *kalyāna* (Delhi- Tōprā, P.E. II, l.2)[30]; *-sayake* (Delhi- Tōprā, P.E., V, l.5)[31] and *-seyake* (Lauriyā-Araraj, P.E. V, l.3)[32] for Skt. *śalyakau*.

(9) Replacement of palatal *ñ* and cerebral *ṇ* by dental *n* throughout (*chhamdamnāni* for *chhandajñāḥ; kammāni* for *karmāni*, Delhi- Tōprā, P.E. IV, ll.9 and 5 respectively)[33].

(10) Peculiar change of *mha* or *jjha* of Prakrit forms *tumhāṇaṁ* or *tujjhesu* and *tumhesu* or *tujjhesu* into *pha* as in *tuphākaṁ* (Sārnāth, P.E., l.9)[34] and *tuphesu* (Dhauli, Separate R.E. I, l.3)[35].

(11) Replacement of the infinitive *tuṁ* by Vedic *tave* as in *ājānitave* (Sārnāth, P.E., l.9)[36] for *ājñātuṁ; palihaṭave* (Delhi- Tōprā, P.E., IV, l.11)[37] for *parihartṭuṁ*, etc.

III. **The Western dialect :** This dialect, occurring in the Girnār and Sōpāra Edicts, has the following linguistic features :

(1) Retention of *r*, that is to say, there is no replacement of *r* by *l* as in the Mid-Indian dialect (*rāja* and *ārabhare*, Girnār, R.E. I, ll.5 and 11 respectively)[38].

(2) The subscript *r* being used as the superscript as in *purtā, portā* and *praportā* for *putrā, potrā* and *parapotrā* respectively (Girnār, R.E. IV, l.8)[39], etc.

(3) Use of single *ña* for Pali *ñña* (for Skt. *nya*) as in *añāni for Skt. anyāni, añe* for Skt. *anyat* (Girnār, R.E. IV, ll.4 and 7)[40].

(4) No assimilated consonants generally. Thus, *adya* changes into *aja, udyāna* into *uyāna, varddhayati* into *vaḍhayati* (Girnār, R.E. I, l.10[41]; R.E. VI, l.4[42] and R.E. XII, l.4[43] respectively).

(5) Initial *ya* is substituted by vowel as in *āva* for Skt. *yāvat* (Girnār, R.E., II, l.2)[44].

(6) *tta* becoming *ṭa* (for *ṭṭa*) as in *saṁvaṭakapā* (Girnār. R.E. IV, l.9)[45] for *saṁvarttakalpa*.

(7) *Shṭa* becoming *sṭa* as in *dhāmadhisṭānāya* for Skt. *dharmādhishṭhānāya, tisṭanto* for Skt. *tishṭhantaḥ* (Girnār, R.E. V, l.9[46] and R.E. IV, l.9[47] respectively).

(8) Retention of *ō* in Nominative singular of *akārānta* stems , as in *eko, mago* (Girnār. R.E. I, l.11)[48].

(9) *ḍḍha* (for Skt. *rddha*) becoming single *ḍha* as in *vaḍhayati* for Skt. *varddhayati* and *vaḍhayisati* for Skt. *varddayishyati* (Girnār, R.E. XII, l.4[49] and R.E. IV, l.7[50] respectively).

(10) *ṇa* is sometimes retained as in *kalāṇa, gaṇanā* and *charaṇa* (Girnār, R.E. V, ll.1 and 2[51]; R.E. III, l.6[52] and R.E. IV, ll.8 and 9[53] respectively).

(11) Lengthening of *a* in *rāño* for Pali *rañño* (Girnār, R.E. IV, l.8)[54].

(12) Preference for *sa* over *sha* and *śa* (e.g. *dosa* = Skt. *dōsha; pasu* = Skt. *paśu;* Girnār, R.E. I, l.4[55] and R.E. II, ll.5 and 8[56] respectively).

IV. **Southern Dialect :** This dialect is found in the Minor Rock Edicts extant in the Southern states of Andhra and Karnataka. It shows the following dialectal peculiarities :

(1) Retention of cerebral *ṇa* as in *pakami..ṇeṇa* and *sāvaṇe* (Brahmagiri, M.R.E., l.5)[57].

(2) Use of *e* in Nominative singular of *akārānta* words instead of *o* as in *phale, svage* (Brahmagiri, M.R.E.,ll. 4 and 5 respectively)[58].

(3) The *Svarabhakti* process employed as in *pakamasa* for *prakramasya; mahāmāta* for *mahāmātra* (Brahmagiri, M.R.E., ll.4 and 1 respectively)[59].

(4) Use of the Vedic infinitive form *tave* as in *pāpotave* and *ārādhetave* (Brahmagiri, R.E. ll. 4 and 5 respectively)[60].

(5) Retention of *ra* which has become *la* in the Māgadha dialect

(6) The conjunct consonants *ky, tm* (which becomes *tp), dr, pr, vy, sv* and *hy* occasionally remain unassimilated. Thus,

ky becomes *k* in *sake* for Skt, *śakyaḥ* (Siddāpura, M.R.E., l.10)[61].

tm becomes *tp* in *mahātpa* for Skt. *mahātma* (Brahmagiri, M.R.E., l.4)[62].

dr becomes *d* in *khudaka* for Skt. *kshudraka (ibid.)*[63].

pr becomes *p* in *pakaṁte* for Skt. *prakrāntaḥ* (Brahmagiri, M.R.E., l.3)[64].

vy becomes *viy* in *vataviyā* for Skt. *vaktavyāḥ* (*ibid* l.1)[65].

(7) *ś* and *sh* have become *s* throughout.

Now, before proceeding further, we may make it clear that the Mid-Indian dialect, which we have described above, corresponds to what is termed as the Eastern dialect. It has been agreed by scholars that it was this Mid-Indian or Eastern dialect that was developed at the Mauryan court and served as the official language of the Aśokan empire[66]. Further, it is believed that whenever an Edict was issued by the king in this language, copies of the drafts were despatched to every provincial government[67], and it was at the provincial capitals that the royal messages were rendered into the dialect in vogue in the province and engraved on rocks, pillars, etc. Considering the dialectal differences and identical texts of the Aśokan epigraphs spread throughout the length and breadth of the country it becomes evident that such a procedure was actually followed.

The Eastern dialect of the Aśokan Edicts has been described in a general way as Māgadhi as it shows change of *r* to *l* and of *o* to *e*, features so peculiar to Māgadhi. However, the Māgadhi of the Aśokan epigraphs cannot be equated with the orthodox Māgadhi Prakrit of the grammar or of the dramas, the chief difference between the

two being, whereas the former knows only of the dental sibilant (*s*), the latter has only the palatal sibilant (*ś*)[68].

The North-Western dialect of the Aśokan Edicts (Shāhbāzgarhi and Mānsehrā) is considered to preserve the Sanskrit elements, for it retains the *r* elements of the *ri* vowel, *r* in conjunct consonants, and all the three sibilants, though with departures from the normal assimilation[69]. Further, we may mention the retention of cerebral *ṇ* in this connection.

Basak[70] holds that the different dialects used in the Aśokan Edicts situated in different regions of India are closely related to each other not only in substance but in form also. Sen holding the, same view writes : "The different regional versions are replete with variants. Most of these variants relate to spelling, or grammar and morphology...."[71].

Of the post-Aśokan epigraphical records in Prakrit, the Kharōshṭhi inscriptions form a distinct group. These inscriptions have been found over a wide territory, from the Swāt country in the north to Sui Vihār and Mohenjo Daro in the south, from Mathurā in the east and Wardak and Loralai in the west. Despite their distribution over a vast territory the Prakrit language employed in these epigraphs is fairly uniform.

Due to the influence of the Sanskrit grammarian Pāṇini who hailed from the Kharōshṭhi region, and the Sarvāstivādins who prevailed in the north-west and who made extensive use of Sanskrit, influence of Sanskrit is noticeable in the Prakrit of the Kharōshṭhi inscriptions. In fact, a complete Sanskrit sentence occurs in a Peshāwar inscription[72] and the language of the Tor Dherai records[73] is almost pure Sanskrit.

Konow[74] discusses at length the linguistics of the Kharōshṭhi inscriptions, comparing it with the language of the *Dhammapada* text found near Khotan. Following him we note below a few salient features of the Prakrit of the Kharōshṭhi inscriptions

(a) Vowel system

The vowels broadly correspond to those in other Prakrits. Long and short vowels are rarely distinguished in writing. There are no long diphthongs, *ai* and *au* having become *e* and *o* respectively; thus we have *Veśakha*[75] for Skt. *Vaiśākha; Proṭhavada*[76] for Skt. *Praushṭhapada*. In foreign words we occasionally find *ī* for *ai*; thus we have *Daīsika* for Greek *Daisios* (Sui Vihār)[77]; *Kaīsara* for Latin *Caesar* (Ārā)[78].

Short and long *a* are both written as *a* as in *prapa* for Skt. *prápā* (Tor Dherai)[79]. *I* and *ī* are both written as *i, cf. divasa*[80], *sarira*[81], etc. The treatment of *u* and *ū* is quite parallel; *cf. hotu* for Skt. *bhavatu* and *puyae* for Skt. *pūjāyai* (Taxila silver scroll)[82]. The vowel *ṛi* seems to have had the same development as in other Prakrits; thus *gaha* for Skt. *grīha* (Taxila silver scroll)[83]; *kata* for Skt. *kṛita, upakacha* for Skt. *upakṛitya* (Zeda)[84], etc. Original *e* is well preserved; thus we have *teṇa, ime*, etc. (Taxila silver scroll)[85]. E also represents *ai* as already stated. O regularly represents Skt. *o* and *au: cf. lōö* for Skt. *lōkaḥ* (Taxila gold plate)[86]; *dormanasta* for Skt. *daurmanasya* (Kurram)[87], etc.

As in other Prakrits we find instances of change of *aya* and *ayi* to *e* and *ava* to *o*; thus we get *ṭhaveti*[88] for Skt. *sthāpayati*; *hotu*[89] for Skt. *bhavatu*; *Budhoruma*[90] for Skt. *Buddhavarma*, etc.

(b) Consonants

With regard to consonants, many of the usual Prakrit features are found: preservation of initials (*kuva*[91] for Skt. *kūpa*, *khada*[92] for Skt. *khāta*, *jadi*[93] for Skt. *jāti*, *tena*[94] for Skt. *tēna* and *dhatu*[95] for Skt. *dhātu*), dropping of finals (*chadu*[96] for Skt. *chatur*) and assimilation of compound stops (*satati*[97], for Skt. *saptati* and *sammupate*[98] for Skt. *samutpāda*). In *hotu* (Taxila scroll)[99], side by side with *bhavatu* in other records, we have the change of *bh* to *h* which is common in this base.

(c) *N* and *ṇ*

Having discussed at length the occurrence of *ṇ* and *n*, and their sound value in a number of Kharōshṭhī inscriptions, Konow concludes thus : "The impression left by this state of affairs is that intervocalic *n* and *n* had the same sound at least over the greater part of the territory, and that the sound was probably a cerebral. The signification of the two letters was consequently lost sight of, the traditional writing acting as a check on the development of a consistent orthography"[100].

(d) Sibilants

Lastly, the chief peculiarity of the Prakrit dialect of the Kharōshṭhī inscriptions, which distinguishes it from all other Prakrits, is the preservation of the three Sanskrit sibilants *ś, sh* and *s*, which are maily distributed as in Sanskrit; thus we have *śarira*, *pratreśra* (Lion Capital)[101], *shoḍaśe* (Fatehjang)[102], *ashaḍasa* (Zeda)[103], *masasa* (Patika)[104], etc.

Another important group of the post-Aśokan Prakrit epigraphs is that of the Bhārhut inscriptions. The Prakrit of these votive records shows predominantly Western dialectal characteristics, e.g. the Nominative singular masculine ending in *-0 (Yakho*, B 1[105]; *thabho*, A 6[106]; etc.) and the preservation of *r*, initially and medially (*rājā*, B 39[107]; *Purikā*, A 16)[108] as opposed to the Eastern *-e* and *–l*. Barua[109] calls this language "a monumental Prakrit with a marked tendency to conform to the Pāli diction". Regarding the inscriptions describing the sculptural representations he[110] is of the opinion that "the scriptural source of the Barhut artists was not in all cases the Pāli but one of the mixed character, with the predominence of the Pāli elements".

Here we note a few salient characteristics of the language of the Bhārhut inscriptions as discussed by Waldschmidt and Mehendale[111] :

(a) Vowel *ṛi*

It is changed to *a, i* and *u (kata* for Skt. *kṛita*, A 112[112]; *miga* for Skt. *mṛiga*, B 47[113]; *natu* for Skt. *naptṛi*, A 50[114]; etc.).

(b) *Ayi and ava*

They become *e* and *o* respectively (*ketā* for Skt. *krayitvā*, B 32[115] and *sonā* for Skt. *śravaṇā*, A 123)[116].

Diphthongs *ai* and *au* become *e* and *o* (*Vejayamta* for Skt. *Vaijayanta*, B 22[117] and *kosala* for Skt. *kauśala*, B 39)[118].

(c) *N* and *ṇ*

The cerebral *ṇ* is in all cases changed to *n*, except in inscriptions A1 and A2 (*bhanaka* or *bhānaka* for Skt. *bhāṇaka*, A 39[119]; *samanā* for Skt. *śramaṇā*, A 12[120]; etc.). In A 1 and A 2 we find *ṇ* preserved in both the body of the word and in terminations (*toraṇa*, A 2[121]; *puteṇa* and *pauteṇa*, A 1)[122].

(d) Cluster *ksh*

It is some times assimilated to (*k*) *kh* but sometimes palatalised to (*ch*) *chh* (*Yakha* for Skt. *Yaksha*, B 1[123] and *bhichhuni* for Skt. *bhikshuṇi*, A 24)[124].

(e) Sibilants

As in the case of the Prakrits of the midland all the three sibilants are reduced to the single dental sibilant without any exception as in *Ajātasatu* (*-śatru*), B 40[125]; *sisa* (*śishya*), B 63[126], etc.

A third group of the post-Aśokan Prakrit records is found in the donative inscriptions on the *stūpas* at Sāñchi. Bühler[127] thus summarises the peculiarities of the Prakrit of these inscriptions : "The language of the inscriptions likewise agrees with the assumption that they belong to the third century B.C., and to the first half of the second. It differs very little from literary Pali and still less from the dialects of Aśoka's edicts, and it shares all the peculiarities of that of the Bharhut inscriptions, which latter, with the exception of the inscription over the gateway, on the evidence of their characters belong to the time of the Maurya dynasty".

As we have already described the salient linguistic features of Aśoka's edicts and the Bhārhut inscriptions, it is redundant to repeat them with reference to Sāñchi inscriptions.

Lastly, before proceeding to consider the epigraphs written in a mixture of Sanskrit and Prakrit, we may note here the peculiarities of the language of the Hāthigumphā inscription of Khāravela of the 1st century B.C. Jayaswal and Banerji[128] write thus about this inscription : "The language of the inscription is Prakrit. The use of *ra*, the affix *o* at the end of the nominative of masculine stems ending in *a*, and the absence of palatal *śa* show that it is not Māgadhī or any eastern dialect of it. Throughout the inscription the dental has practically replaced all other sibilants. The doubling of consonants even when necessary, has been omitted. The cerebralisation of dentals is also to be seen as in *paṭisaṁthapanaṁ* (l.3). There is also an attempt to approach classical

Sanskrit in certain cases, *e.g.*, *Mahāmeghavāhaneṇa* (l.1) and *Varṇdāpayati*". They[129] further state : "The language of the record is a very near approach to the canonical Pali. But as in Jaina Śaurasēni, *tha* in this dialect becomes *dha*, *cf. padhame* (l.3), *radhå* (l.4), *vitadha* (l.5), *Goradhagiri-* (l.7), *Madhuraṁ* (l.8), *Bharadhavasa-* (l.10), *Utarāpadha-* (l.11), but not in all cases, *cf. Pithuṁḍa-* (l.11)."

Mixed dialect

It has been stated earlier that a mixture of Sanskrit and Prakrit was employed in the epigraphs of North India, belonging to the period between the 1st century B.C. to the beginning of the 4th century A.D. This mixture consisted partly of Prakrit and partly of Sanskrit words and forms. It is not possible to discover a fixed principle according to which these words and forms of two different languages were mixed, the only criterion to label the language of a particular inscription, either as 'Prakrit influenced by Sanskrit' or 'Sanskrit influenced by Prakrit, being the abundance of words and forms of Prakrit or Sanskrit in it respectively. Even though it is possible to hold in a general way that in the early period Prakrit predominated and Sanskrit prevailed later, it is difficult to demonstrate this transformation stage by stage. For, we come across inscriptions with strong Sanskrit element in the early period and those with greater Prakrit influence in a comparatively later period. Thus, for instance, the Mathurā pedestal inscription[130] of the time of Kanishka, dated in year 14, shows much fewer deviations from the Sanskritic mode of spelling, the rules of *sandhi* and declension, etc., than are generally found in the inscriptions of the Kushāṇa period. Contrary to this, the Mathurā inscription[131] of Year 92 (corresponding to 170-71 A.D.) shows greater Prakrit influence as can be noticed in words like *bhikshusa*, *Grāmadesikasa*, *sthuva*, etc.

Sanskrit

We have stated earlier that with the rise of the Imperial Guptas Prakrit was totally replaced by Sanskrit in the field of north Indian epigraphy. We have also noted the Mixed dialect stage through which the north Indian epigraphs passed during the four centuries beginning with the 1st century B.C., and which brought about the transformation in the 4th century, just referred to. In this connection it is worthy of note that the bright prospect of Sanskrit is heralded as early as the 1st century B.C. through the Hāthi-bāḍā inscription[132] of the king Pārāśariputra Gājāyana Sarvatāta at Nagarī (Rajasthan). This is the earliest inscription wholly composed in Sanskrit, discovered so far in India. Palaeographically it is assigned to the 1st century B.C. It is not a unique instance of its kind. Of the first century A.D., we have the Ayōdhyā inscription[133] of Dhanadēva, which is in Sanskrit. The Isāpur *Yūpa* inscription[134] of the time of Vāsishka, dated in 102 A.D. and the Junāgaḍh inscription[135] of Rudradāman, dated in 150 A.D. mark the further progress of Sanskrit in the 2nd century A.D. To the same century belongs the Allahābād Municipal Museum *Yūpa*

inscription[136]. Despite a few mistakes in it, this inscription is completely free from Prakritism. Of the 3rd century A.D., we have the Nāndsā (Rajasthan) *Yūpa* inscriptions[137] and the four Maukhari inscriptions[138] on *Yūpas* from Baḍvā (Rajasthan), all of which are couched in Sanskrit. The Jagatpur (U.P.) Brick inscriptions[139] of Śilavarman, the Sāñchi inscription[140] of Jīvadāman and the Abbottabad (West Pakistan) inscription[141] of *Mahārāja* Kadambēśvaradāsa, are other examples of Sanskrit inscriptions of 3rd century A.D.

Though there are a few mistakes in the composition of some of the epigraphs quoted above, it is beyond any doubt that their language is Sanskrit. It is true that the number of these Sanskrit inscriptions belonging to the pre-Gupta age is too meagre. But they clearly indicate that Sanskrit was progressing slowly towards its heyday in the Gupta period. The prevalence of Sanskrit in the later part of the Mixed dialect stage also suggests the same thing. Sanskrit was the sole epigraphical medium of North India from the beginning of the Gupta period to the end of the period under discussion.

Keeping in view the hoary antiquity of the Sanskrit language one would expect the earliest epigraphical records of North India to have been composed in it. But we know that the Aśokan edicts are written in Prakrit. This incongruity is well explained in the light of the rise and spread of the two heterodox religions, Buddhism and Jainism. Both of these religions were founded in the 6th century B.C., as a revolt against the then prevailing orthodox Brahmanical religious system predominated by rituals and ceremonies involving animal slaughter. The founders of these new faiths revolted not only against the orthodox Brahmanical religion, but also against the Sanskrit language which was its sole medium, and adopted Prakrit for their religious writings and discourses. In doing so their aim was to reach the common man and convince him of the tenets of their faiths and increase the number of their followers. Now, to consider the religious history of North India, we know that right from the beginning of the historical period to the beginning of the Gupta age both Buddhism and Jainism enjoyed royal patronage. Therefore, it is no wonder that the language of the epigraphical records of this period is Prakrit. Almost all Prakrit inscriptions of North India were written under the influence of Buddhism and Jainism.

Further, it is interesting to note that the gradual appearance of Sanskrit in north Indian epigraphs coincides with the efforts for the revival of the Brahmanical religion. Thus, the Nagarī inscription of Sarvatāta recording the erection of a stone-enclosure round the Nārāyaṇa Vāṭikā, the Ayōdhyā inscription of Dhanadēva referring to the horse-sacrifice performed by Pushyamitra Śuṅga, the *Yūpa* inscriptions from U.P. and Rajasthan, the Jagatpur Brick inscriptions recording the performance of the horse-sacrifice by Śilavarman, and the Abbottabad inscription of *Mahārāja* Kadambēśvaradāsa, recording the erection of a *Kumāra-sthāna* (temple for Kārttikēya), all of which have been referred to earlier, are in the Sanskrit language. This identity of Prakrit and Sanskrit languages as epigraphical media in North India, with Buddhism and Jainism, and Brahmanical religion respectively is crystal clear. The rise and fall of either of

these languages clearly indicate the prosperity or adversity of the religion or religions to which it was affiliated.

Epigraphical Literature

In the preceding chapters we have shown how important inscriptions are for a proper understanding of the various aspects of life in ancient India. They are equally important for a study of the literary achievements of ancient Indians. With a change in the trend of Indian historiography, socio-economic studies have been receiving greater attention than they did in the past. Accordingly in the epigraphical field, even fragmentary and damaged inscriptions are being considered important for whatever little light they throw on a particular aspect of life of the period to which they belong. It is disappointing to note that, inspite of such a significant change in the approach of the epigraphists and Indologists, the literary aspect of inscriptions has not received the attention it deserves. Indologists have not gone a step further than what Bühler[142] wrote a century ago. Chhabra has reviewed a few articles on this subject appearing in different journals, in his introduction to *An anthology of Sanskrit Inscriptions* (Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, 1964). But so far as we know, a systematic work dealing with the literary merits of Indian inscriptions has not yet been published. In the following pages we propose to notice a few inscriptions belonging to the period of our study with a view to indicate their importance as literary compositions of the period to which they belong. It is neither intended nor within the scope of this book either to furnish an exhaustive list of literary inscriptions or to take up a detailed literary criticism of any inscription. We only intend to show by citing some instances how Sanskrit literature developed in the field of epigraphy during the period of our study.

As early as the 1st century A.D. elements of Sanskrit poetry start appearing in the north Indian inscriptions. Thus, in the Mōrā well inscription[143] of the time of *Mahākshatrapa* Rājūvula's son Śōḍāsa, recording the establishment of the images of the five heroes of the Vrishṇi clan by a lady named Tōshā, there is the phrase *jvalata iva paramavapushā* in l.4. This phrase, referring to the stone images of the *paṁchaviras*, is an unmistakable example of *Utprēkshālaṁkāra*. Besides, Lüders[144] has quite convincingly proved that the last two lines of this record begin like a *Bhujaṅgavijṛimbhita*. These two points in this inscription indicate that Sanskrit poetry was in a fairly developed state at the time of this record. Commenting on the occurrence of the said metre in this epigraph, Lüders[145] writes : "The occurrence of this stanza is of considerable interest for the history of Sanskrit literature. The metre *Bhujaṅgavijṛimbhita* is found also in Kumāralāta's *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā*, but our inscription is about 200 years earlier than that work, and if here a most artificial metre such as *Bhujaṅgavijṛimbhita* is used for a Sanskrit stanza, it is proved that the Sanskrit Kāvya poetry was fully developed in the first century B.C." However, it is to be noted here that this inscription is assigned to the 1st century A.D. by Sircar[146].

In the Junāgaḍh inscription[147] of Rudradāman, dated in 150 A.D., we have a clear evidence of the development of the ornate style of Sanskrit prose which was further enriched by the subsequent eulogists and attained its fuller afflorescence in the works of classical poets like Daṇḍin and Bāṇa. We summarise here Bühler's[148] critical estimation of this *praśasti*. The text of this inscription is composed in the form of *Gadya-kāvya*. Inspite of its occasional grammatical mistakes, Prakritisms and epic licence, this composition is an example of *kāvya* proper. On this point Bühler writes: "The many points of similarity with the epics, which the language of the Girnār *praśasti* exhibits, could have led to the supposition that the author had cultivated himself exclusively by the reading of epics and that a *kāvya* proper was not at all known to him. But such a supposition is contradicted, first of all, by general impression, which his composition makes. Whoever reads it attentively would feel that in the matter of the development of the style, it shows a stage considerably in advance of the epics. Further the supposition is contradicted by several particulars leading to a similar conclusion, especially the important passage in l.14. wherein the author enumerates the attributes of a good composition, prevalent in his time"[149].

The frequency and the length of the compounds occurring in this *praśasti* clearly indicate that its author knew well the cannons laid down by Daṇḍin according to which *ōjas* or *samāsa-bhūyastva* is a principal feature of a prose composition. *Anuprāsa* (*gurubhirabhyastanāmnō Rudradāmnō*, l.4, *śrishṭa-vrishṭinā*, l.5. etc.). *Upamā* (*parvvata-pāda-pratisparddhi*, ll.1-2, and *Marudhanvakalpaṁ*, l.8), and *Utprēkshā* (*parjjanyēn= aikārṇavabhūtāyām= iva pṛithivyāṁ*, l.5) are the only figures of speech met with in this composition. Its author relies more on the effect of representation of facts marked with strong outlines, than on the conglomeration of more or less conventional figures of sense. He succeeds quite well in individual descriptions, though he fails in the fineness of execution and the elaboration of details. Commenting on the passage beginning with *sphuṭa-laghu-madhura*, in l.14, which he restores as *sphuṭa-laghu-madhura-chitra-kānta-śabdasamayōdār-ālaṁkṛita-gady-padya [-kāvya-vidhāna-praviṇēḥna*,[150] Bühler[151] holds that Rudradāman was himself devoted to the cultivation of court poetry like Samudragupta and Harshavardhana. In this connection he writes : "..... the invasion of the Scythians and other foreign races had extinguished the national art as little as the sciences"[152]. He further writes: "Thus, whatever we may say about Rudradāman busying himself with poetry - a fact which is very probable, though of course we cannot be absolutely sure about it, so much is certain that the author of our *praśasti* lays on poetic conditions very smiliar to those prescribed by Daṇḍin, that in the second century there must have been already in existence romances and other works in high prose in the Vaidarbha style, which in no way differed from the samples of classical composition preserved to us, and that there also existed an *Alaṁkāra-śāstra*"[153].

It is rather strange that the Kāvya-style developed in the Junāgaḍh inscription of Rudradāman was not followed up by the epigraphical composers of the 2nd and 3rd

centuries of the Christian era for, excepting the Nāndsā Yūpa inscriptions[154] of 226 A.D., we hardly come across inscriptions composed in a poetic style. The text of these two ('A' and 'B') inscriptions is practically identical and they record the performance of the Ēkashashṭhirātra sacrificial session by the king [Śrī]sōma. The composer of the text of these records adopts the ornate style of Sanskrit prose. The composition abounds in compounds and two of them *viz.*, *sita-sabh-āvasatha-taḍāka-kūpa-dēvāyatana-yajñā-dāna-satya-prajā-vipulapālana-prasaṁgaiḥ* (B. ll.9-11) and *purāṇa-rājarshi-dharmma-paddhati-satata-krita-samanugamana-niśchayasya* (B. ll.11-12) are fairly long. *Anuprāsa* is the main figure of speech in this composition, *e.g. chaitrapūrṇṇamāsyām=asyām* (B. l.1), *samupagatām ṛiddhim=ātmasiddhim* (B. ll.6-7), etc. The act of the performance of the sacrifice has been described as so pleasing as the sight of the new moon (*prathama-chandra-darśanam=iva*, B. ll.2-3). This is an instance of *Upamālaṁkāra*. There are a few more instances of this figure of speech in this composition. Commenting on the style of this composition, Altekar writes: "The record is a *praśasti*, and it must be acknowledged that the language used is appropriate for the occasion. It gives a vivid idea of the fame and exploits of the hero it commemorates"[155].

Coming to the 4th century A.D., the Allahābād stone pillar inscription[156] of Samudragupta, consisting of a panegyric of the great Gupta emperor, composed by his *Sāndhivigrahika* Harishēṇa, is a solid example of the development of the Sanskrit Kāvya-style under the patronage of the Imperial Guptas. With this record commences an epoch of brisk literary activity in the ancient Indian epigraphical field during which a number of inscriptions were composed in the ornate poetic style, and which coincides with the classical period of Sanskrit literature enriched by the works of great poets like Kālidāsa and Bhāravi. We summarise here the literary criticism of this composition following Bühler[157] and Bhandarkar[158].

This *praśasti* consists of thirty-two lines and a half, with eight stanzas at the beginning, a long prose passage in the middle, and, one stanza, again, at the end. The first two and the first half of the third stanza of this *praśasti* are effaced. The fourth stanza reads :

[Ā]rryy= [ai*]h= ity= upaguhya bhāva-piśunair= utkarṇṇitai romabhiḥ*

sabhyēsh= ūchchhvasitēshu tulyakulaja-m[l]ān-ānan-ōdvi[kshi][ta]ḥ [|*]*

sn[ē]ha-vyāluḷitēna bāshpa-guruṇā tattv-ēkshiṇā chakshushā yaḥ pitr=ābhihitō [n]i[r]ḍ[kshya] nikhi[lāṁ pāhy=ēva]m=[u]rv[v]m=i[t]i [||]4*

It may be noted that Chhabra[159] reads *ēhy=ēh=ity=upaguhya* for *[Ā*]rry=[ai*]h=ity=upaguhya*. His criticism of the earlier reading is quite convincing and the reading suggested by him aptly suits the context. On this second point he writes: "I need hardly add anything in defence of this reading. It fits in so well with the scene depicted and the sentiments expressed in the verse. As remarked above, the phrase has a familiar ring about it. In literature it is often found used in like situations"[160]. He further quotes a verse from the *Rāmāyaṇa* wherein occurs the

expression *ēhy= ēh= ity= abravīd Rāmō*. This verse describes how Chandragupta I entrusted the kingship to his son Samudragupta. This stanza has been highly praised by both Bühler and Bhandarkar. The former writes thus about this verse : " It is not possible to have a more concise and more graphic picture of the situation. There is not a word which is unnecessary; and one believes as if he sees the scene with his own eyes, how the old Chandragupta, in the presence of his sons, each of whom hoped to have the highest fortune, and of his court household who were afraid lest the choice may fall on an unworthy person, turns round to his favourite son. This verse is one of the best productions the Indians have given us in the domain of miniature-portraits, which is their forte. This very example would also illustrate Harishēṇa's special care for the choice and arrangement of words, a qualification which can be easily seen even in other parts of the composition, both metrical and prose"[161]. Bhandarkar agrees with this view and explains the same as a merit of poetry called *udāttatā* by analysing and appreciating the whole stanza. In verses 5-8, too, there are some poetic merits, especially *ōjas* or vigour consisting in pregnancy of meaning.

Bhandarkar also points out certain Poetic Imperfections (*kāvyadōshas*) such as lack of *prasāda* or *artha-vaimalya* ('perspicuity of sense'), *Adhikapada* (redundancy), *guṇībhūta-vyaṅgya* (Implication of secondary type) and *Garbhitatā* (intrusion of one sentence into another), occurring in the metrical part of this composition including V. 4.

The prose portion of this composition is characterised by very long compounds which are so constructed as to permit, to the reciter and the hearer, pauses between long compounds by the insertion of shorter phrases. Further, in the long compounds, the words are so chosen as to bring about a certain rhythm through the succession of short and long syllables; and care is taken to see that this rhythm changes from time to time. Considering these points Bhandarkar observes: "This indicates not only the extreme proficiency of Harishēṇa in prose composition but also the high standard reached by the *gadya* portion of *Kāvya* literature in the fourth century A.D."[162] There are many phrases in the prose portion which mark Harishēṇa's individuality not only in diction and phraseology but also in conception. Thus, for instance, in the passage *sarva-pṛithivī-vijaya-janit-ōdaya-vyāpta-nikhil-āvanitalāṁ kṛttim= itas= tridaśapati-bhavana-gaman-āvāpta-lalita-sukha-vichāraṇāṁ= ākhakshāṇa iva bhuvō bāhur=ayam=uchchhritaḥ stambhaḥ* (ll.29-30). Samudragupta's fame which is personified as a female, as is usually done by Sanskrit poets, is stated to have occupied the whole earth and when she found it impossible to spread further, she is stated to have gone to the palace of Indra where she roamed easily and happily. According to Bhandarkar[163] this passage is the first instance in Sanskrit literature where the ascent of Fame to the higher regions or rather to the abode of Indra is spoken of. Bühler's view that Harishēṇa does not much indulge in figures of speech has been convincingly refuted by Bhandarkar who cites examples of *Anuprāsa* of five kinds and a number of *Arthālaṁkāras* occurring in this composition.

Both Bühler and Bhandarkar are agreed in regarding this composition as *Kāvya*. Concluding his criticism of this composition, Bhandarkar states: "What stamps Harishēṇa as a *kavi* of no mean order is not simply the choice of words or the manner of combining them into phrases, clauses and sentences but rather the development, within the compass of this small composition, of an individualistic style of his own in accordance with the adage, "style showeth the man". At any rate, he cannot be surpassed in the art of delineation so far as the prose part of his composition is concerned"[164].

Bühler[165] holds that this *praśasti* belongs to the class of mixed compositions called the *Champū*. But Bhandarkar[166] refutes this view and designates it as *Biruda* on the strength of the definition *Gadya-padya-mayī rāja-stutir= Birudam=uchyatē* (The panegyric of a king, in prose and verse, is styled *Biruda*) given in the *Sāhityadarpaṇa*.

Lastly, regarding the style of this composition, Bühler's view[167] that it is composed in the Vaidarbhī style is contradicted by Bhandarkar[168] who draws attention to the long compounds occurring both in the prose passage and the stanzas of this *praśasti*, the combination of the first and third, with the second and fourth letters of any series (e.g. *stabdh-ō* ....., *ōchchhṛi* ..... V. 3, etc.), and the occurrence of initial or subscript *r* or of *ś* and *sh* frequently met with in this composition, all of which are characteristic features of the Gauḍī style, which suits well the delineation of the Heroic (*Vīra*) and the Furious *(Raudra)* sentiments involved in the description of the exploits of Samudragupta.

Thus, the Allahabad *praśasti* clearly proves that the Sanskrit Kāvya-style was fully developed by the middle of the 4th century A.D. to which period it belongs.

Now we pass on to the epigraphical literature of the 5th century A.D. The Mandasōr inscription[169] of Kumāragupta (I) and Bandhuvarman, dated in 437-38 A.D. and 473-74 A.D., recording the erection of a Sun temple at Daśapura and its re-building, on the first and the second dates respectively, by a guild of silk-weavers, was composed by Vatsabhaṭṭi. We bring out the salient poetic features of this composition as discussed by the two scholars referred to above with reference to Harishēṇa's *praśasti*.

This composition comprises the descriptions of cities, oceans, mountains, seasons, etc., which are prescribed for a *Mahākāvya* by rhetoricians. Thus, for instance, verse 4 describes the Lāṭa country and verses 6-13 give a word-picture of Daśapura, its position in the world, its lakes and its edifices, while the description of the seasons occurs in verses 31-33 and 40-41. Excepting the five verses (34-37 and 44) in the *Anushṭubh* all the verses of this composition are in ornate metres of the Kāvya-style, e.g. *Āryā* (4, 13, 21, etc.), *Drutavilambita* (15), *Hariṇi* (16), *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* (1-2), etc. This use of the manifold metres in this composition shows that Vatsabhaṭṭi was a master of prosody and an expert in versification. The clustering of verses in twos (*Yugma*, 4-5 and 21-22), threes (*Viśēshaka*, 23-25 and 26-28) and so forth, which is another extraneous characteristic of Artificial poetry, is met with in this composition.

Use of long compounds (verses 4, 6, 14, 32, 33 and 41), and the employment of soft or hard sounding syllables in the different *pādas* of a verse (e.g. V. 26 where the first three *pādas* consist of soft syllables and the last *pāda* contains only hard sounding syllables), as against the *samatā* (maintenance of uniformity in all the four *pādas* of a verse) of the Vaidarbhī style, in this composition tend to show that it is in the Gauḍī style.

Two varieties of the *Anuprāsālaṁkāra*, *viz.*, the *Chhēkānuprāsa* (noticeable in almost every stanza) and *Lāṭānuprāsa* (verses 1, 2, 18 etc.), and *Arthālaṁkāras* such as *Upamā*, *Utprēkshā*, *Samāsōkti*, and others have been employed in this composition. Many images and turns of expression contained in this composition, which are characteristics of the Kāvya-style, clearly show that Vatsabhaṭṭi wrote at a time when the science of Indian poetics had evolved itself to an eminent degree.

Critically examining the similarity between the ideas contained in verses 10 and 11 of Vatsabhaṭṭi's composition and those of the verse *Vidyutvantam lalita-vanitāḥ* ..... occurring in the *Mēghadūta* of Kālidāsa, Bühler[170] thinks that Vatsabhaṭṭi intended to surpass Kālidāsa. Likewise, Bhandarkar[171] states that V. 31 of the Mandasōr inscription describing the winter season is an undeniable imitation of Kālidāsa's *Ritusamhāra*, chap. V, verses 2-3, as was first pointed out by F. Kielhorn. Thus, it has been established beyond doubt by these scholars that Vatsabhaṭṭi was conversant with at least two works of Kālidāsa. Further, the images and turns of expression occurring in many other verses of Vatsabhaṭṭi's composition leave the impression that they have been borrowed by him from the works extant in his time. Thus, it is quite reasonable to hold that a considerable number of *Kāvyas* were known when Vatsabhaṭṭi lived and wrote, upon which he drew as he did upon the works of Kālidāsa, but which have been lost to us.

Summing up his criticism of this composition Bhandarkar remarks : "We may, thus, conclude that Vatsabhaṭṭi was, on the whole, an excellent and versatile versifier, but not a first rate poet with new, original ideas. The Mandasōr inscription is rather the exercise of a Pandit who had studied the *Kāvyas* and Rhetoric of his time than the production of a poet of inborn talent"[172].

Vatsabhaṭṭi's composition is of great historical importance. Firstly, it proves that Kālidāsa flourished before 472 A.D., the date of the Mandasōr inscription, since, as has been stated already, Vatsabhaṭṭi borrowed ideas from the works of this great poet. Secondly, on the evidence of this composition, which shows that its author borrowed also from some other poets who were his contemporaries or lived before him, it becomes evident that Artificial poetry was in full bloom with a long history when Vatsabhaṭṭi lived and composed his *pūrvā*.

Judging from the number of epigraphs composed in a poetic style found at Mandasōr, this place seems to have been a great centre of learning during the Gupta period. Another inscription from this place possessing certain elements of Sanskrit Kāvya-style is the Mandasōr inscription[173] of Mālava Samvat 524 (467-68 A.D.). This inscription,

recording the construction of a *stūpa*, a well, a charitable water stall and an *ārāma* by Dattabhaṭa, the Commander of the forces of king Prabhākara, was composed by Ravila, a contemporary of Vatsabhaṭṭi. With the exception of a word in the beginning and two at the end, the whole of the text is in verse consisting of eighteen stanzas. The metre employed in this composition is *Upajāti* except in verses 1, 17 and 18 which are in *Vasantatilakā*, *Pṛithvī* and *Anushṭubh* respectively. The language is free from any grammatical solecisms.

Anuprāsālaṁkāra has been employed in V. 1 (*Sugatāya gatāya*) and 7 (*dadhāra dhārādharadhīra-ghoshaḥ*). Of the very few *Arthālaṁkāras* which we come across in this composition the *Ullēkhālaṁkāra* in V. 9 is interesting. This stanza reads :

dānē Dhanēśaṁ dhiyi vāchi ch=ēśaṁ
ratau Smaraṁ saṁyati pāśapāṇim
Yam= artthi- vidvat-pramad-āri-varggās-
sambhāvayāṁchakrur= anēkadh= aikam

Here one and the same individual is stated to have been fancied variously as the lord of wealth in munificence, as the lord of speech in talent, as the god of love in enjoyment and as the god of death in battle, by suppliants, learned men, young women and enemies respectively.

The composer's power of imagination is exhibited in V. 5 where, while describing the heroism of Gōvindagupta, it is stated that, seeing that the kings deprived of their prowess surrendered to his feet, even Indra was upset with fear, lest he should be dethroned from his position by the powerful king. The description of the nature given in verses 14 and 15 is indicative of the spring season and it is in the conventional style. Lastly, in V. 12, the water of the well has been described as so cool (refreshing) as the meeting of friends (*suhṛit-saṅgama-śitala*), pure as the mind of sages (*manō munīnām=iva nirmala*) and wholesome as the words of elders (*vachō gurūṇām=iva pathya*). Though this is a beautiful description, as pointed out by Chhabra[174] here the composer has exploited the idea of Vālmiki (*ramaṇīyaṁ prasannāmbu sanmanushya manō yathā*). On the whole, it may be stated that Ravila has exhibited whatever little poetic ability he possessed within the limited scope of this inscription.

Besides the two inscriptions discussed above, the Gaṅgdhār stone inscription[175] of Viśvavarman and the Junāgaḍh rock inscription[176] of Skandagupta, both belonging to the 5th century A.D., are of literary interest. In fact in the second record it is specifically termed as a literary composition (*Iti Sudarśanataṭāka-saṁskāra-graṁtha-rachanā samāptā*, Text, l.23).

At this stage it is worthwhile to take note of the language of the 27 copper-plate grants[177] of Bhuluṇḍa, Svāmidāsa, Rudradāsa, Bhaṭṭāraka and Nāgabhaṭa, all of whom are reasonably held to have ruled during the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. as feudatories

of the Imperial Gupta rulers. These grants show a contrast to the epigraphical compositions discussed so far. All these grants are composed in Sanskrit prose. But for the introductory portion of a grant of *Mahārāja* Bhuluṇḍa, dated in the (Gupta) year 47, which possesses the figures of speech *Anuprāsa*, *Upamā* and *Rūpaka*, an instance of imagination, and a kind of rhythmic style, there is no poetic interest as such in the texts of these grants. But their language is interesting in so far as it betrays many innovations. Prakritisms and ungrammatical forms occurring in these records, at a time when the classical Sanskrit was being cultivated under the patronage of the Imperial Gupta rulers, can well be explained if we take into consideration the fact that these records were meant to be understood by the literates living in and around the tribal region of Madhya Pradesh which is the provenance of these copper-plates. As pointed out by Ramesh[178], these grants were the results of the attempts of the Gupta emperors at brahmanising this tribal region through their subordinates. Therefore, it is natural that simple Sanskrit prose interspersed with Prakrit and local forms has been employed in these grants to facilitate the understanding of the unsophisticated population that could not appreciate the intricacies of an ornate style.

Now we take up an appreciation of two inscriptions of the 6th century A.D., one of them found at Mandasōr and the other at a village named Risthal in the Mandasor District of Madhya Pradesh. Both the records are composed by Vāsula, the son of Kakka.

The Risthal inscription[179] of Prakaśadharman, dated in 515-16 A.D. records the construction of a tank and a Śiva temple. It consists of 29 stanzas in different metres, of which *Anushṭubh* and *Vasantatilakā* have been employed in 7 verses each. The other metres of this composition are *Upajāti*, *Viyōgini*, *Vaṁśasthavila*, *Drutavilaṁbita*, *Pushpitāgrā* and *Mālinī*.

The figure of speech *Anuprāsa* has been sparingly used in this composition. Its only two instances are *sva-kulōchita rājya-varddhanas- tanayas-tasya sa Rājyavarddhanaḥ* (V. 11) and *sucharita-ghaṭita- prakāśa-dharmmā nṛipati-lalāma-sutaḥ Prakāśadharmmā* (V. 13). These instances appear rather artificial and crude, showing lack of imagination on the part of the composer. There is a *Pūrṇōpamā* in V. 10 wherein the king is stated to have dispelled the darkness of the worlds by his virtues like the sun with his rays. Here the king is compared to the sun and his virtues to the rays of the sun. Both of them are said to have destroyed the darkness of the world and there is a set of epithets common to both the virtues and the rays. In V. 9 Vibhushaṇavarddhana is identified with a tree and his fame with its flowers (*sphuṭa-yaśaḥ kusum-ōdgama-pādapaḥ*). This is an example of metaphor (*Rūpakālaṁkāra*). Śachī's anxiety over her husband's frequent visits to the earth with an ardent desire for the *sōma* drink at the sacrifices performed by the king Ajitavardhana, described in V. 8 has a touch of imagination about it, and there is the suggestion of 'poetic fancy' (*Utprēkshādhvani*). It is interesting to note that this very picture of a despondent Śachī is depicted in the Nāgārjunī Hill Cave inscription[180] of Anantavarman, assigned to the 6th century A.D. (*yasy=āhūta-sahasranēttra-viraha-kshāmā*

sad= aiv= ādhvaraiḥ Paulōmī chiram= āśru-pāta-malinām dhattē kapōla-śriyaṁ, l.2). Verse 23 is a clear instance of the *Utprēkshālaṁkāra* wherein the temple of Brahman with its cloud-barring pinnacles is fancied as if it were measuring the very sky.

Verse 1 refers to the *Ardhanāriśvara* form of Śiva. The composer's imagination is at its height when he states in this verse that the left half of Śiva's face (*i.e.* Pārvatī's face) displayed anger when he saluted *sandhyā* (twilight, here personified as a female rival). The first half of V. 12 is formed of five verbs (*vilalāpa mumōha vivyathē viniśasvāsa visaṁjñātām yayau*) all of which are in perfect tense (*liṭ*), and refer to the sorrow of the womenfolk in the harems of the enemy kings. This verse reminds us of the verse :

tastanur= jahvalur= mamlur= jaglur= lluḷhirē kshatāḥ |
mumūrchchhur=vamamū raktaṁ tatrishuś=ch=ōbhayē bhaṭāḥ ||

from the *Bhaṭṭi-Kāvya* (14.30). Further, the metre of this verse (*Viyōginī*) suits well the description of the lamentations of the estranged wives of the vanquished enemy kings.

Lastly, the statement in V. 15 that Prakāśadharman accepted the kingship for the welfare of the people and not for the pleasure it offered (*lōkōpakāravidhayē na sukhōdayāya rājaśriyaṁ śubhaphalōdayinīṁ bibhartti*) is an echo of a verse from Kālidāsa's *Abhijñāna Śākuntalam* (5.7), which reads :

sva= sukha-nirabhilāshaḥ khidyasē lōka-hētōḥ
pratidinam=atha vā tē vṛittir=ēvaṁvidh=aiva |
anubhavati hi mūrdhnā pādapas= tīvramushṇaṁ
śamayati paritāpaṁ chhāyayā saṁśritānām ||

On the whole, this composition of Vāsula contains a variety of metres, some well conceived figures of speech and a touch of imagination.

Another composition of Vāsula is the Mandasōr stone pillar inscription[181] of Yaśōdharman (525-35 A.D.). This inscription records the erection of the pillar (on which it is engraved) for the purpose of reciting the king's glory and power. Except for the two words at the end recording the engraver's name, this record is in verse throughout. There are nine verses in all. All the verses, except the last one which is in the *Anushṭubh*, are in the *Sragdharā* metre which suits well the delineation of the heroism of Yaśōdharman which is the theme of this composition.

A noteworthy point of this composition is the the total absence of the *Śabdālaṁkāras* in it. There are two beautiful similes in V. 3 which state that the title of *Sāmrāṭ* (Universal sovereign) well befitted Yaśōdharman and shone with him like a resplendent jewel set in good gold (*kalyāṇe hēmni bhāsvān-maṇi=riva*), whereas, applied with a mere imaginary sense to the other kings, it (*i.e.* the title) did not shine at all like an offering of flowers placed in the dust (*pāṁsushv=iva kusuma-baliḥ*). Verse 4, wherein the king is described as having enjoyed such countries as could not be conquered by the Guptas and the

Hūṇas of renowned prowess, is an example of *Viśēshālaṁkāra*. Description of the dominions of the king including the whole of the northern part of India, from the river Lauhitya to the Western Ocean, and from the Himālayas to the mountain Mahēndra, in V. 5, is an instance of the *Udāttālaṁkāra* (*samṛiddha-vastuvarṇana*). Verses 7 and 8 containing a series of 'poetical fancy' (*Utprēkshā*) with reference to the column erected by the king attest to the power of imagination on the part of Vāsula. Thus, the column is fancied to have been erected, as if to measure out the earth (*gām=ēv=ōnmātuṁ*), as if to enumerate the multitude of the heavenly lights (*vigaṇayitum= iva jyōtishāṁ chakkravālaṁ*), as if to point out the path of his own fame to the skies above (*nirdēshṭum mārggam=uchchair-ddiva iva sukṛit-ōpārjjitāyāḥ sva-kṛttēḥ*), and lastly, as if it were a lofty arm of the earth, raised up in joy, to write upon the surface of the moon the excellence of the virtues of Yaśōdharman (*ity= utkarshaṁ guṇānāṁ likhitum= iva Yaśōdharmmaṇaś=chandra-bimbē rāgād=utkshipta uchchair-bhuja iva ruchimān=yaḥ pṛithivyā vibhāti*).

Thus, rich diction and imagination and choice of a suitable metre, all supporting the delineation of the valour and glory of the king, make this composition a piece of poetry. Considering the merits of these two compositions Vāsula may well be called a *kavi*.

Another poetic composition of the 6th century A.D. is the Haṛāhā inscription[182] of Iśānavarman, composed by Raviśānti, the son of Kumāraśanti and resident of Gargarākaṭa. Excepting the name of the engraver in l.22 the whole of this record is composed in verse. It consists of 23 stanzas in 8 different metres including the lengthy ones like *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* and *Drutavilambita*.

In the first verse of this composition it is stated that in Śiva's heart Cupid did not find room, though a woman (*i.e.* Pārvatī) forms one half of his body (*yasy= ārddha-sthita-yōshitō= pi hṛidayē n= āsthāyi chētō-bhuvā*). It is quite interesting to note that the author has borrowed this idea from Kālidāsa and presented it here in slightly different words (*cf. kāntā-saṁmiśra-dēh-ōpy= avishayamanasāṁ yaḥ parastād=yatmāṁ*, *Mālavikāgnimitra*, I.1).

Of the *Śabdālaṁkāras*, *Anuprāsa* has been employed in V. 4 (*bhūtir=bhuvō bhūtayē*) and V. 5 which reads :

lōka-sthitināṁ sthitaye sthitasya Manōr= ivāchāra-vivēka-mārggē |
jagāhirē yasya jaganti ramyāḥ sat-kṛttayaḥ kṛttayitavya-nāmnaḥ ||

Among the *Arthālaṁkāras*, *Upamā* (verses 11 and 12), *Rūpaka* (V. 15), *Atiśayōkti* (verses 9, 14 and 17) and *Bhrāntimat* (verses 7 and 10) have been employed. Verse 9, stating how the king kept up his spirits unperturbed by the darkness of the Kali Age (*Kalimaya*) by dint of his virtues, describes how he qualified his bravery with political wisdom (*nītyā śauryaṁ*), his friendship by honesty (*suhṛidam=akuṭilēna*), his lofty ambition by his noble descent (*uttam=ēchchhāṁ kulēna*), his liberality by fit recipients (*tyāgaṁ pātrēṇa*), his might of wealth by modesty (*vitta-prabhavaṁ hriyā*), his youth by self-restraint (*yauvanaṁ saṁyamēna*), his speech by truthfulness (*vāchaṁ satyēna*), his manner of life by the injunctions of the *Śruti* (*chēshṭāṁ śruti-patha-vidhinā*) and his high prosperity by humility

(*praśrayēṇ=ōttama-rddhiṁ*). This is an instance of *Atiśayōkti* in so far as the king is stated to have possessed all the worldly virtues put to proper use in an ideal manner.

In both the instances of the figure of speech *Bhrāntimat* (verses 7 and 10) peacocks are described as rejoicing at the sight of the volume of the sacrificial smoke which filled the quarters and which was mistaken for clouds by these birds.

Verses 14 and 16 consist of letters hard to pronounce, and are in the *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* metre, both of which suit the heroic sentiment of these verses.

These are the poetical elements occurring in this composition.

Sāstri's assessment of this composition runs thus: "The composer of this inscription does not appear to have been a poet of a very high order or a *Kavi* par excellence. The tautological expressions which are to be met with in different places are too glaring for a real poet. But the prosody seems to be all right, in V. 9 the exigencies of the metre have even caused the author to use a wrong form of a word, writing *hṛiyā* for *hṛiyā*, which would have offended against the scansion"[183].

Besides these three inscriptions discussed above, the Mandasōr inscription[184] of Yaśōvarman and Vishṇuvardhana is another literary composition of the 6th century A.D. The copper-plate charters of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśi rulers who ruled in the 6th and 7th centuries A.D., also have some literary interest about them. Thus, for instance, the prose composition of the genealogical portion of the Aḍhabhāra plates[185] of Mahā-Nannarāja consists of long compounds (ll.1-5 and 5- 7), figure of speech *Anuprāsa* (*pāda-prasād=āsādita* and *naya-vinaya*, l.2, *prabhāva-paribhāvi-sambhāvanasya*, ll.3-4, etc.) and the poetic phenomenon called *antādi* in which a compound begins with the last word of its predecessor (..... *sambhāvanasya sambhāvan=ābhyāsa* ....., l.4, and ..... *śaśinaḥ śaśi-vaṁśa-sambhūtēḥ*, l.5). There is also the *Arthālaṁkāra Upamā* (*Mahāśivatwararājasya Pradyumna iva Kaitabhārēr=ātmajaḥ*, ll.7- 8).

By the 7th century A.D. epigraphical literature had a tremendous growth in North India. We have a good number of inscriptions of this century which are composed in the ornate style of Sanskrit poetry. In fact, it is difficult to pick and choose inscriptions of this period for considering their literary merits. A noteworthy feature of the development of the epigraphical literature in this century is the increase in the number of inscriptions composed in prose style. Thus, for instance, all the land grants[186] of the Maitrakas of Valabhī and some grants[187] of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśi kings, major portion of the Tipperah copper-plate grant[188] of Lōkanātha, two grants[189] of the Early Guhilas, etc., all belonging to the 7th century, are composed in Sanskrit prose. In this connection it is to be noted that Bāṇa and Daṇḍin, the two masters of the Sanskrit prose style, lived in the 6th- 7th centuries A.D.

Now we may take up a literary assessment of a few epigraphs of the 7th century A.D. The Udayapur inscription[190] of Aparājita, dated in 661 A.D., records the construction of a temple of Vishnu by Yaśōmatī, the wife of Varāhasiṁha who was the Commander

of this Guhila king. It is composed by Dāmōdara, son of Brahmachārin and grandson of Dāmōdara. The composer, obviously out of humility, calls his work 'mockery of a poem' (*kāvya-vidaṁbanā*). Excepting two words at the beginning and two at the end, and the portion recording the date, the entire text is in verse consisting of twelve stanzas in eight different metres including the long ones like *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* and *Sragdharā*.

Anuprāsa is employed in verse 6 which reads :

Tasya nāma dadhatī yaśō-matī
gēhinī praṇayinī Yaśōmatī |
chittam= utpathagataṁ nirundhatī
sā babhūva vinayād= Arundhatī ||

and verse 10 which reads :

Yāvad= bhānōḥ khurāgra-vraṇita-jala muchas= tunga- raṅgās=turaṅgā
yāvat= krāmanti pṛithvī-talam=atula-jalā nō samudrāḥ samudrāḥ |
yāvan= Mērōr=nnamērūprasava-surabhayō bhānti bhāgāḥ śubh- āgāḥ
Śaurēr=ddhām=āstu tāvat=kṛitaniyama-namad-vipra-siddhaṁ prasiddhaṁ ||

Of the *Arthālaṁkāras*, besides *Upamā* and *Rūpaka*, *Ullēkha*, *Virōdha* and *Atiśayōkti* are met with in this composition. Thus, in V. 2 the arms of Śauri have been variously described as a pillow (*upadhānaṁ*) for Lakshmī, as huge rocks (*gaṇḍa-śailāḥ*) to contain the ocean at the dissolution of the world, as hatchets (*kuṭhārāḥ*) to cut down the forest of the trees that are the haughty agitated demons, and as pillars (*stambha-bhūtāḥ*) that support the mansion of the three worlds. This is an instance of *Ullēkhālaṁkāra*. Verse 5 is an example of *Virōdhālaṁkāra* wherein Varāhasiṁha's fame is described as unexhausting though it was seized by people, as reddening (*rañjana* also means entertaining) the earth though it was white, as spreading in ten quarters though it was steady, and as wandering though it was tied up with ropes (*guṇa* means both a rope and virtue). In V. 7 Yaśōmatī is described by means of *Pratipālaṁkāra*, as excelling Śrī, Gaurī and Ratī, all of whom are said to possess some defect or the other, and as such unworthy of becoming standards of comparision for Yaśōmatī. Thus, she is said to have had no comparison (*atulōpamā*).

In the first verse Hari is depicted as a *Dakshiṇanāyaka* who is defined as "one who maintains impartial love towards many *nāyikās*" (*anēkāsu nāyikāsu avaishamyēṇa snēhānuvartī dakshiṇō nāyakaḥ*)[191].

On the whole, though Dāmōdara calls his composition a *kāvya-vidambanā*, considering his hold over prosody, conception of the figures of speech and power of imagination, we may justly call him an accomplished poet.

The Kudārkoṭ inscription[192] assigned to the latter half of the 7th century A.D. records the construction of a building for *traividya* Brāhmaṇas by Harivarman. It is composed

by Bhadra, the son of Vāmana. Excepting the invocatory *ōm namaḥ*, and the names in lines 13-15, the whole of this record is composed in verse. There are in all 18 stanzas in different metres, 9 in *Anushṭubh*, 3 in *Āryā*, 3 in *Vasantatilakā*, 2 in *Upēndravajrā* and 1 in *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*.

This composition abounds in figures of speech. With the exception of Nos. 13, 15, 17 and 18, every stanza consists of one or more *Alaṁkāras*. *Anuprāsa* is met with only in V. 12 (*yēn=ārthitvam=agatv=aiva jitāḥ pratyarthinaḥ sadā*). In V. 9 it is stated that Harivarman, by his command made the rulers bow down before him. Here there is a pun on the word *mahībhṛitaḥ* which means both rulers and mountains; and, the epithets *karkaśātmanaḥ* (meaning 'hard-hearted', with reference to the rulers and 'having hard surfaces' with reference to the mountains) and *baddha-mūlāḥ* (having hard struck root in the soil) are applicable to both of them. Thus, this is an instance of *Ślēshālaṁkāra*. This very figure of speech leads to *Upamālaṁkāra* (*Ślēshōtthāpitōpamā*) in V. 1 in which goddess Durgā is compared with the range of the snowy mountain (*Prālēyāchalabhūḥ*). Here again, the epithets *sannihita-nilakaṇṭhā* 'approached by Śiva', with reference to Durgā, and 'frequented by peacocks', with reference to the mountain), *nitambataṭa-śōbhinī* ('shining with her broad hips', with reference to Durgā, and 'beautified by broad ridges', with reference to the mountain) and *sasiṁhaguhā* ('accompained by the lion and by Kārttikēya', with reference to Durgā, and 'full of caves of lions', in case of the mountain), are common to both the goddess and mountain. Again, in V. 11 there is a mixture of the figures *Ślēsha* and *Samuchchaya*. Here Harivarman is stated to have turned back the enemies facing his arrows (*mārgaṇ=ābhimukhāḥ*), but not the suppliants who approached him intending to beg (*mārgaṇ=ābhimukhāḥ*). The other epithet *lubdhāḥ* (greedy) and the adverb *phala-kāṁkshayā* (desiring for gain) in the verse are applicable to both the enemies and the suppliants. *Utprēkshālaṁkāra* occurs in 3 verses. Thus, in V. 6 the marks of the healed-up sword-wounds on the broad breast of Harivarman are fancied as though they were numbers engraven to mark his victories in many battles (*anēka- saṁyad-vijayāṅka-saṁkhyā nikhāta-rēkhā iva*). In V. 10 the digging of wells by Harivarman is fancied as if it were the opening of the veins of the earth, the body of which had become heavy with the great weight of the edifices erected by him.

There is greater imagination in V. 14 wherein Takshadatta's death in the battlefield is described. Here it is stated that the vital spirits (*asavaḥ*) of Takshadatta, being enraged at the illtreatment meted to them by him (*parivṛiddha-manyava iva*), who renounced them like worthless straw (*tṛiṇam=iva tyaktā*), though he granted safety to all (*sarvvēshām=abhayapradēna*), departed when they found an opportunity of leaving him, using as their way of exit the open wounds inflicted by the adversaries (*astra-vraṇa-randhra-nirggama-pathā*). In V. 3 the acquistion of fortune by Haridatta is stated to be different from the acquistion of goddess Lakshmi by Vishṇu. In fact, there is a suggestion that the former's acquisition of fortune, which was effected with ease, is superior to the latter's acquistion of the goddess Lakshmi, which could be achieved with great difficulty.

Thus, there is *Vyatirēkālaṁkāradhvani* in this verse in so far as the object of comparison (*upamēya*, here Harivarman) is conceived to be superior to the standard of comparison (*upamāna*, here the god Vishṇu). Such a conception is facilitated by a set of three phrases which, invoking *double entendres*, can be interpreted with reference to both Harivarman and the god Vishṇu. Thus, *ratnasaṁchaya* means 'hoard of precious stones' and 'the ocean'; *bhūbhṛit* means 'a ruler' and 'a mountain', and *bhujaṅga* means 'the dissolute friend of a king' and 'a serpent'.

There is the figure of speech called *Viśēshōkti* in V. 2 wherein it is stated that, though raised to eminence by Harsha, Haridatta was not changed for the worse (*śrī-Harshēṇa samutkarsham nītō=pi vikṛitō na yaḥ*). Here there is a cause, but no effect. This condition suits the definition of the figure of speech *Viśēshōkti* (*kāraṇasākalyē satyapi kāryasyānutpattiḥ*)[193].

Thus, a variety of metres and skill and imagination in the *Alaṁkāras* are witnessed in this composition of Bhadra.

Now we discuss two prose compositions of the 7th century A.D. The prince of Wales Museum plates[194] of the Gurjara king Dadda III, dated in 675 A.D., record the grant of a village by the king. With the exception of the imprecatory and benedictory verses at the end, the whole composition is in prose. Instances of long compounds, a characteristic feature of the Sanskrit prose style, are found in the passages *niśita-nistriṁśa-dhārā-dārit-ārāti-kari-kumbha- muktāphala -chchhal-ōllasita-sita- yaśō=ṁśuk-āvaguṇṭhita-digvadhū-vadana-sarasijaḥ* (ll.6-7). *praṇayi-jana-manōratha-vishaya-vyatita- vibhava-sampādan -āpanit-āśēsha -śēsha-pārthiva-dān-ābhimānō* (ll.9- 10) and *prāchya-pratīchy-ādhirāja-vijṛimbhita-mahāsaṁgrāma-narapati-sahasra-parivārit-ānēka -gaja-ghaṭā- vighaṭana- prakaṭita - bhuja-vīryya-vikhyāta-Bāhusahāy-āpara-nāmā* (ll.12-13).

Anuprāsālaṁkāra has been liberally employed in this composition. e.g. *prabala-kalikāla-vilasit-ākalita-vimala-svabhāvō* (l.3), *bhramad- adabhra-śubhr-ābhra-vibhrama-yaśō-vitānaḥ* (ll.4-5) etc. Another figure of speech often met with here is *Rūpakā*, e.g. *yaśōvitāna* (l.5), *pratāpānala* (l.6), etc. In the passage beginning with *niśita-nistriṁśa*, quoted above, the king Jayabhaṭa is stated to have veiled the lotus-like faces of the women, who were the quarters, with the cloth of his white glory that shone out in the guise of the pearls coming out of the temples of the elephants of his enemies, rent open by the edge of his sharp sword. This is an instance of the poetic imagination of the author of this composition. The poetic convention *(kavisamaya)* that there are pearls in the temples of elephants is too well known.

The long compounds and the hard syllables and the syllables *r, ś* and *sh* (e.g. ll.6- 7) in this composition are characteristic of the Gauḍī style.

The texts of the land grants of the Maitraka rulers of Valabhī offer excellent instances of the ornate Sanskrit prose style. There is not much of variety in these stereotyped texts. Even if the texts of all these are considered to be identical and forming only one

text, this one text itself is enough to show the tremendous growth of the Sanskrit prose style of the epigraphical literature in the 6th-7th centuries A.D.

Judging from the ornate style of these records it becomes evident that their composers were learned scholars in the different branches of knowledge. Their grand imagery is expressed in high-flown language. At times ideas have been borrowed from great authors like Kālidāsa. Thus, for instance, the phrase *sakala-smṛiti-praṇita-mārgga samyak-paripālana-prajā-hṛidaya-ramjan-ānvarttha-rāja- śabdaḥ*,[1] stating that the word *rājan* was literally true in the case of Guhasēna in as much as he pleased the hearts of his subjects, is borrowed from the *Raghuvaṁśa* of Kālidāsa where Raghu is described by the same words (*cf. rājā prakṛitirañjanāt*, IV, 12), This phrase occurs invariably in all the Maitraka grants.

The Maitraka records are excellent specimens of the Gauḍi style abounding in vigour. The very first expression of these records, *viz.*, *prasabha-praṇat-āmitrāṇāṁ Maitrakāṇāṁ* (Maitrakas, who had by force bowed down their enemies) is a good example of vigorous diction. Long compounds, a *sine qua non* of the Gauḍi style are frequently met with in these records. Alliteration (*Anuprāsa*), another poetic element conducive to the Gauḍi style, has also been generously employed. A range of *Arthālaṁkāras* from the simple *Upamā* to the sophisticated ones like *Samāsōkti* adorn the composition.

With this brief introduction, we may now proceed to examine the literary merits of a Valabhi grant[195] of Dhruvasēna III, dated in 653-54 A.D. This composition abounds in long compounds, and two of them are very long. One of them reads: *samara-śata-jayapaṭāk -āharaṇa- pratyal-ōdagra-bāhu-daṇḍa- vidhvaṁsita-nikhila-pratipaksha-darpp-ōdayaḥ* (l.21). The two passages, *prasabha- praṇat-āmitrāṇāṁ Maitrakāṇāṁ* (l.1), and *saṁhat-ārāti-paksha- lakshmī-paribhōga-daksha-vikkramaḥ* (l.9) are instances of Alliteration (*Anuprāsa*). There is a poetic phenomenon occurring in this composition, in which a compound begins with the last word of its predecessor, e.g., *labdha-pratāpāt pratāp=ōpanata* and *anurāgād=anurakta* (l.2), and *vikramō vikram=ōpasaṁprāpta* (l.9). This is called *antādi*, and like Alliteration it produces a charming effect when recited.

Of the *Arthālaṁkāras*, besides *Upamā* and *Rūpaka*, a number of other figures of speech occur in this composition. Instances of the *Ślēshālaṁkāra* of rare beauty are met with in the sentences *prakṛitibhyaḥ paraṁ pratyayam = arthavantam = atibahu-titha-prayōjan-ānubandham=āgama-paripūrṇnaṁ vidadhānaḥ* (ll.25-26), *sandhi-vigraha-samāsa-niśchaya-nipuṇaḥ* (l.26) and others. Here the play on the words rests on the ordinary and grammatical meanings of the words *prakṛiti, pratyaya, sandhi, vigraha* and *samāsa*, and thus the king is described as versatile both in polity and grammar. There are several such instances of a conventional type occurring in this record (ll.31, 37 and 38).

The expression *mūrttimāniva purushākāraḥ* (who was, as it were, the very personification of primeval manhood), referring to Dhruvasēna II in l.23, is an instance of *Utprēkshālaṁkāra*. Another instance of this figure of speech occurs in ll.39-40. Here

the tip of the hand of the king Dhruvasēna III, resplendent with the rays of jewels of his bracelet, glittering with masses of water that was continually sprinkled at donations, is fancied as though it were a fresh sprout of *śaivala* (the aquatic plant *Vallisneria Octandra*).

In the compound *rūpa-kānti-sthairyya-gāmbhīryya-buddhi-sampadbhiḥ smara-śaśāṅk-ādrirāj-ōdadhi-tridaśaguru-dhanēśān= atiśayānaḥ* (l.5) wherein the king Guhasēna is described as having surpassed cupid, the moon, the king of mountains, the ocean, the preceptor of the gods and Kubēra, in beauty , lustre, stability, profundity, wisdom and wealth respectively, there is *Atiśayōktyalaṁkāra* so far as the king's virtues are placed on a level even higher than superhuman, and *Yathāsāṁkhyālaṁkāra* as the virtues beauty, lustre, etc., combined in a group, individually correspond to cupid, the moon, etc., clustered in another.

In the compound *adhigata-kalā-kalāpaḥ kāntimān nirvṛiti-hētur=akalaṅkaḥ kumudanāthaḥ* (l.24), the king is compared to the moon, mentioning properties common to both of them. But at the end the former is suggested to be superior to the latter in not having *kalaṅka* (meaning 'sin' in the case of the king, and 'spot' in the case of the moon). Similarly, in the following sentences, *prājya-pratāpa-sthagita-digantarālaḥ, pradhvaṁsita-dhvānta-rāśiḥ* and *satat-ōditaḥ savitā* (l.25), the king is compared with the sun but stated to be excelling him by his (king's) nature of always rising (i.e. never setting like the sun). In both these descriptions there is *Vyatirēkālaṁkāra* as the object of comparison (*upamēya*, here the king) is stated to be superior to the standard of comparison (*upamāna*, here the moon and the sun).

In the statements like *prakṛishṭa-vikramō=pi karuṇā-mṛidu- hṛidayaḥ* (who, though very brave, had a merciful heart, l.27), *śrutavān=apy=agarvvitaḥ* (who, though learned, was free from pride, ll.27-28), *kāntō=pi praśamī* (who, though attractive, was full of restraint, l.28), etc., two mutually contradicting qualities have been juxtaposed. Thus, for instance, normally a learned person is proud of his learning, but here the king is depicted as free from pride even though he was learned. This may be explained in another way. Though there was every reason for the king to become proud he did not do so. This poetic phenomenon, in which no effect is said to have produced despite the existence of cause, is a figure of speech called *Viśēshōkti*, whose definition has been cited earlier in this chapter (see p. 279). The presence of the word *api* (expressing contrast) in all these phrases seems to make us believe that there is *Virōdhālaṁkāra* in all these instances. But in this figure of speech (*i.e. Virōdha*) the contradiction or incongruity, appearing in instances like *pushpavatyapi pavitrā, Krishṇōpy=asudarśanaḥ*, etc., is only apparent and verbal, and is explained away by properly construing the sentence (*cf. Virodhaḥ saḥ avirōdhēpi viruddhatvēna yad=vachaḥ, Kāvyaprakāśa*, X. 24). Therefore, there is no *Virōdhālaṁkāra* in the instances cited above inspite of the presence of the word *api* in them. They have to be taken as instances of the figure of speech *Viśēshōkti* as explained before.

Lastly, as an instance of extreme imagery we may quote here the passage *tat-pāda-nakha-mayūkha-saṁtāna-visṛita-Jāhnavī-jal-augha-prakshālit-āśesha-kalmashaḥ* (all whose sins were washed away by the flood of the waters of the Gaṅgā, which flowed from the cluster of rays (that issued from) the toe-nails of (his father, l.7).

The foregoing is an attempt at a brief survey of some inscriptions of literary importance. Right from the 1st century A.D. north Indian epigraphs witness the steady development of the Sanskrit Kāvya-style. From the Gupta period onwards the influence of classical poets like Kālidāsa is clearly visualized in them. That there existed a well developed science of poetics (*Alaṁkāra-śāstra*) is attested to by these literary inscriptions. The importance of these compositions lies in the fact that they strongly refute Max Muller's assertion that the Indians in consequence of the incursions of the Śakas and other foreigners ceased from literary activity during the first two centuries A.D. and Sanskrit poetry having been dormant for five centuries was revived and flourished in the reign of a king Vikramāditya of Ujjain in the 6th century A.D.[196]

From the above survey we come to know that it is from the Gupta period onwards that we come across a good number of inscriptions composed in an ornate style of Sanskrit poetry. The period during which epigraphical Sanskrit literature achieved a remarkable progress coincides with the classical age of Sanskrit literature. In fact, this progress of the epigraphical literature is a part and parcel of the over all efflorescence of Indian culture in all the spheres of life during the Gupta period which is rightly called the 'Classical Age'.

The growth and spread of the epigraphical literature is not restricted to the north alone. Even in the south we have instances of inscriptions composed in an ornate poetic style dating from an early period. Thus, for example, the Nāsik inscription[197] of the 19th year of Siri Puḷumāyi, belonging to the 2nd century A.D., is a good example of Prakrit prose. The author of this inscription uses enormous sentences with long compounds, alliterations and even mannerism of later Kāvyas. His familiarity with Sanskrit is well attested to in this composition. Of the 6th century A.D., the Tāḷagunda inscription[198] of Kâkusthavarman, composed by Kubja, is of much literary interest. Though called a *Kāvya* by the author it is not a composition of high order. Commenting on its literary value Kielhorn at one point writes: "But the author presents us a vivid picture of the persons and events dealt with, and does so in plain, but vigorous language. This at any rate is the case with the verses 4-24. The verses 25- 32 are in a different style, approaching somewhat to that of a real Kāvya; but they mainly contain such conventional phrases as are met with in any ordinary praśasti"[199]. As against this, the Aihoḷe inscription[200] of Pulikēśin II, dated in 634-35 A.D. and composed by Ravikīrti, presents a good many elements of Kāvya proper. About this composer Kielhorn writes: "Ravikīrti is thoroughly conversant with the rules of Alaṁkāra-śāstra, and like a true *dākshiṇātya*, he is unsurpassed in some of his *utprēkshās*. He is familiar with the works of India's greatest poets, and seems to have especially profited by the

study of that most perfect poem of Kālidāsa's, the Raghuvaṁśa"[201]. Thus, it becomes evident that Kālidāsa's works influenced the epigraphical composers of not only the north but also the south.

Brāhmī

As has been stated at the beginning of this chapter, Brāhmī, Kharōshṭhī and Siddhamātrikā are the three scripts employed in the inscriptions belonging to the period and area of our study. What follows is a brief account of the salient features and stages of development of and problems connected with these scripts.

One of the yet unsettled problems of Indian Epigraphy is the origin of the Brāhmī script. Different theories that have been propounded to trace the origin of this script may broadly be divided into two groups: (1) those which trace its origin from some foreign source, and (2) those which regard Brāhmī as of indigenous origin.

Otfried Muller suggested that Indians learnt the alphabet from the Greeks when they came into contact with them at the time of Alexander's invasion[202]. Scholars like James Prinsep, E. Senart and many others supported this view and attributed the origin of the Brāhmī script to the Greek alphabet[203]. This view is not acceptable as it does not agree with the literary and palaeographic evidence "which make it more than probable that Brāhmī was used several centuries before the beginning of the Maurya period, and had a long history at the time to which the earliest Indian inscriptions belong"[204]. Moreover, as proved by the Greek version of the Shar-i-Kuma inscription[205], both Brāhmī and Greek were prevalent during the time of Aśoka; and hence the former's derivation from the latter would be most unlikely.

The theory of the origin of Brāhmī from a Semitic alphabet was first suggested by Sir William Jones in 1806, and thereafter many scholars followed him[206]. In propounding this theory scholars differ as to which branch of the Semitic alphabet influenced the Brāhmī script, some tracing its origin from Phoenician, others from South Semitic, and yet others from North Semitic.

Identity of many of the Phoenician letters with the earliest forms of Brāhmī signs was first suggested by A. Weber[207]. R.N. Cust also expressed almost the same view and believed that "the resemblance of the Indian alphabet to those that have taken root in Western Asia, Africa, and Europe, all of which are unquestionably of Phoenician origin, is so striking that it is difficult even to entertain the idea of a separate origin"[208]. A.C. Burnell, on the other hand, held the view that "all available information points to a Phoenician-Aramaic origin of Indian alphabet"[209]. A contrary view to this theory is held by R.B. Pandey that Rigvedic evidence indicates the Indian origin of Phoenicians (*Paṇis*), who carried the alphabet from India to the shores of the Mediterranean[210]. This view is criticised by C.S. Upasak as "based on a very fanciful interpretation of the data"[211].

Deecke, Canon Taylor and Sethe believe that the Brāhmī descended from the script known in the South Semitic region[212]. The strongest objection to this view is that the resemblance between Brāhmī and South Semitic is very slight[213].

Bühler championed the theory that the Brāhmī script was derived from the North Semitic[214]. On the basis of a comparison between Brāhmī and North Semitic alphabets, he maintained that twenty two letters of the Brāhmī script were directly derived from the North Semitic character; some of these are found in early Phoenician inscriptions, a few in the Mesha Stone Inscription, and five in the script on Assyrian weights. For the remaining signs, he adopted certain devices to suit his purpose. To answer the most serious objection that Brāhmī was written from left to right whereas Semitic ran right to left, Bühler pointed out a few wrongly written reversed letters like *dha*, *o* and *ta* from Aśokan inscriptions and the reversed style of the Ēran coin inscription (which according to Upasak is most probably due to the inadvertence in the engraving of the mould)[215], as the reminiscences of the original Brāhmī writing from right to left.

Bühler's theory has been refuted by Ojha[216], Pandey[217], Bhandarkar[218] and Upasak[219]. These scholars hold that the derivations suggested by Bühler are unconvincing. Thus, for instance, Pandey remarks that these methods "are fantastic, and if they are accepted as valid the Brāhmī characters can be derived not only from the Phoenician and the Aramaic but from any known characters of the world"[220]. Likewise Upasak observes that "the few evidences which may be adduced to show that Brāhmī was originally written from right to left are very inconclusive"[221].

As regards the theories of the indigenous origin of Brāhmī, Edward Thomas and others maintained that the Dravidians were responsible for the invention of this script. The basis for this opinion seems, as pointed out by Pandey[222], to be the assumption that before the supposed Aryan invasion of India the Dravidians occupied the entire land and they, being culturally more advanced than the Aryans, invented the art of writing. Against this theory it has been argued that the earliest specimens of writing are found in northern India, the original home of the Aryans, and not in the south, the native place of the Dravidians[223].

General Cunningham[224] maintained that the Indian scripts were first evolved from pictographs and later became syllabic. He believed that the Indian alphabets are purely Indian in origin, but, at the same time, he suggested that the Indians must have borrowed the plan of their system from Egyptians. He also ventured to give the name of each group of Brāhmī letters after the part of human body which seemed to him to be represented in the original picture or ideograph. This theory has long been discarded.

Another important suggestion in favour of the indigenous origin of Brāhmī is that it was derived from the Indus script. Langdon was the first to point out that "the early syllabic alphabet of Northern India, known as Brāhmī script, from which all later

characters were derived, is most probably a survival of the early pictographic system of the Indus Valley"[225]. Hunter[226] has traced out the signs of Brāhmī from Indus Valley seals and thereby he has tried to establish a tentative affinity between the two. Pandey[227] and Sircar[228] are the other advocates of this theory.

Against this theory Upasak[229] points out that the time gap between the disappearance of the Indus civilization and the first appearance of Brāhmī is too great to establish a direct derivation of Brāhmī from the Indus script, and that the decipherment of the latter itself is unsettled as yet.

It has been generally admitted that the Brāhmī alphabets were made perfect and complete by the Sanskrit Grammarians[230]. Taylor's appreciation of the Brāhmī script runs thus : "Bold, simple, grand, complete, the characters are easy to remember, facile to read and difficult to mistake, representing with absolute precision the graduated niceties of sound which the phonetic analysis of Sanskrit grammarians had discovered in that marvellous idiom. None of the artificial alphabets which have been proposed by modern phonologists excel it in delicacy, ingenuity, exactitude and comprehensiveness"[231]. The arrangement of letters which represents the symmetrical combination of symbols designed to indicate various shades of sound which are grouped together, the cerebral letters, aspirate consonants, *anusvāra* and *anunāsika*, and the three sibilants are some of the special features that led the scholars to infer that such a perfect system could only be possible through the 'skilled grammarians', who were the masters of phonetics[232].

Upasak[233] for the first time made an attempt to point out certain noteworthy features of Brāhmī which are seemingly evolved on the basis of the rules of Sanskrit phonetics. He has quite convincingly proved that twenty four out of fortyfive letters of the Brāhmī script have basic or primary forms whereas the other twentyone are more or less evolved from them[234].

The Aśokan inscriptions in Brāhmī are engraved on rocks, pillars and caves, while one is carved on a stone slab. The style of engraving differed from hand to hand. The variance also occurs through the material on which the record is engraved. Different varieties of a letter found in a particular inscription suggest that more than one hand were employed for engraving the same inscription. Thus, for instance, in the Rock Edicts of Girnār[235], nine forms of *a*, four forms of *ra* and six types of *ja* are met with. Similarly, there is a marked difference between the Delhi-Tōprā Pillar Edicts I-VI and VII[236]. On account of the difference between the surfaces of the natural rocks and those of the finely polished pillars a clear distinction can be noticed between the engravings on these surfaces. The letters on the pillars are more accurate and artistic than those on the rocks.

The Brāhmī of the Aśokan inscriptions or the Early Brāhmī as it is called, is straight and angular in its general appearance, though a few letters like *ṭa*, *tha* and *chha* are round in shape. Cursiveness appears throughout, but not abundantly. The height of the

letters is usually equal; and at times even in the conjuncts an equal height is maintained by making the second letter smaller in size (see for instance the words *asti*, l.6, R.E. I, and *vijitamhi*, l.1, R.E. II in the Girnār version)[237]. The lines often run parallel and very rarely there is any digression. Regularly the lines go from left to right except in M.R.E. at Erraguḍi[238] where some of the lines run from right to left. This is a solitary instance of its kind.

Some sort of punctuation is used in the Edicts of Aśoka. Words or groups of words are usually separated by leaving some space between the two. This feature is better illustrated in the engravings on pillars (see for instance Delhi- Tōprā P.E. mentioned above and the Rumindēi pillar inscription)[239]. Normally, each edict starts on a fresh line, leaving the space blank at the end of the preceding line (see for instance the plates of the Girnār Rock Edicts mentioned above). Punctuation by a straight horizontal line, as found in the Girnār Rock Edicts, is a special feature of some of the inscriptions. However, a uniform system of punctuation does not seem to have been perfected at the time of these inscriptions.

Lastly, considering the occurrence of the different forms of the letters Bühler[240], and following him Ojha[241] and Pandey[242], maintained that there existed regional varieties in Aśokan Brāhmī. But Upasak, categorically rejects this view. He observes that "no regional variety as such can be found in the Aśokan inscriptions. The difference that we notice is mainly due to the individual stylistic characteristics either in engraving or in writing the draft which was copied by the engraver. Regional forms of writing cannot be traced, since there exist fundamental varieties in the inscriptions of the same area, even sometimes in the same inscription"[243]. He demonstrates how two different forms of the letter *ā* have been employed in the R.Es. at Girnār and Sōpārā even though these two places are situated in the same western region, and how the form of this letter, as employed in the R.E. at the latter place is manifested in the M.R.E. at Gujarrā, a place situated at a distance of a thousand miles in a different region[244]. Further, he illustrates how as many as six forms of *ja*, all the prevalent forms of *ra*, six shapes of *da*, three varieties of *ya* and *bha*, and both the forms of *ha* are met with in the Girnār R.Es[245]. He points out a few more instances of this kind[246]. Upasak's line of argument is quite sound and it is hard to agree with the view that there were regional styles of writing the Early Brāhmī.

Before proceeding to the Brāhmī of the Kushāṇa inscriptions or the Middle Brāhmī, we may note the salient features of this script as employed during the intervening period between the Mauryan and the Kushāṇa periods. It is to this period that the Hāthigumphā inscription of Khāravela, Dhanabhūti's inscription at Bhārhut, the Pabhosā cave inscriptions and the oldest votive inscriptions from Mathurā belong. Bühler designates the letters of these inscriptions, except those of the Hāthigumphā inscription which he terms Kaliṅga alphabet, as 'the Śuṅga type of the ancient Brāhmī'[247].

The tendency to shorten the upper vertical lines is common to both the Śuṅga and Kaliṅga alphabets[248]. The broadening of the letters or of the lower parts of *ga, ta, pa, bha, ya, la, sa,* and *ha*, is found in both these alphabets with the exception of the Bhārhut inscription[249], and the thickening of the tops of the upper verticals, and the use of the so-called *Serif*, are particularly remarkable only in the letters of the Bhārhut inscription and the Kaliṅga alphabet[250].

The alphabet of the Northern Kshatrapas, as illustrated in the inscriptions of the *Mahākshatrapa* Rājuvula and of his son Śōḍāsa, also belongs to this intervening period. It is characterised by the equalisation of all the upper verticals, except in *la*[251]; the constant use of the *Serif*, occasionally replaced, as in *bha*,[252] by a nail-head or wedge; and the constant use of angular forms for *gha, ja, pa, pha, ma, la, sha* and *ha*[253]. Other, mostly cursive, innovations are found in the peculiar form of *cha*[254], in the slanting angular form of *ḍa*[255], etc.

The script of the Kushāṇa inscriptions or the Middle Brāhmī, is developed from the alphabet of the Northern Kshatrapa inscriptions. It has a characteristic appearance in its squat and broad letters, specially noticeable in *ha, ya, ṇa, bha*, etc.[256] There is a small nail-head at the top of the upper verticals of the letters[257]; and there is a tendency for the lower ends of all vertical strokes to remain straight except in the case of *ra*[258].

Now to note a few salient innovations in the individual letters, *a* appears in two forms, old and new[259]. The three dots of *i* are replaced by three strokes, one of them set vertically[260]. Consonant *kha* is a triangle with a curve over the apex to left. *Ma* has two forms, an angular[261] and a roundish one[262]. Lastly, *ya* mostly has a hook or circle on the left limb[263], and in ligatures is either looped[264] or bipartite[265].

According to Dani "it is not possible to speak of a uniform Kushāṇa style as applicable throughout their empire during their rule"[266]. He recognises many styles of engraving in the epigraphs of the Kushāṇa period[267]. One of them is the 'Kauśāmbī style' displayed in the inscriptions of the Magha rulers of Kauśāmbī[268]. Explaining how this style differs from the one employed at Mathurā, Dani observes: "But they (the inscriptions of the Magha rulers) make a complete departure in preferring the looped *na*, the open-mouthed *ṇa*, the tailed *ma*, the hooked *la*, the looped *sa* and the hooked *ha*. A definite Kushāṇa influence is seen in the use of the hooked variety of the subscript *ya*, while the looped form of *ya* is seen when used singly. These cursive forms of the letters are familiar from the Allahābād pillar inscription of Samudra Gupta, and later, in the Gangetic Valley"[269].

The Gupta alphabet, also termed the Late Brāhmī[270], was developed from its predecessor, the Kushāṇa alphabet. This alphabet "was prevalent in Northern India from the beginning of the fourth century to the middle of the sixth century A.D."[271] Scholars have, classified this alphabet in different ways. Fleet uses only two expressions, 'the Northern class of alphabet' and 'the Southern class of alphabet' to describe the

palaeography of the whole bulk of the inscriptions of the Gupta period, occasionally referring to the 'box headed' type of Central India and the so-called Kuṭila type[272]. Sivaramamurti[273] recognises three varieties of the Gupta alphabet, the Northern, the Central and the Southern. Dani observes : "On the whole the early Gupta inscriptions carry further the regional styles of the third century A.D. They differ from the early inscriptions in the formation of the head-mark, in the evolution of the uniform medial vowel marks, and in the development of a few letters"[274]. Bühler[275] classifies the Gupta alphabet into Eastern and Western varieties.

It is difficult either to accept or reject any of these classifications. It is a fact that no two inscriptions of a given date and region can be identical in respect of their palaeography. Therefore, it becomes necessary, especially when the inscriptions of a period under discussion are spread over in a comparatively larger area, to group their alphabets into many classes. But, at the same time, multiplication of such classes, when there is no marked difference between the alphabets of different inscriptions, does not serve any useful purpose. Broadly speaking it seems reasonable to classify the Gupta alphabet into Eastern, Western and Central varieties. Ramesh upholds this classification[276].

Now, to note only a few important features of the Gupta alphabet : (1) The lower parts of the right-hand verticals of *a, ā, ga, ḍa, ta, bha* and *śa* are much elongated, and those of *ka* and *ra* also remain long. These nine signs have about double the length of those without verticals[277]. (2) In addition to the *i* of the Kushāna period[278], there occur, due to the preference for letters flattened at the top, the later form of *i* with two dots above[279], and the one consisting of a short horizontal line with two dots below[280]. (3) The guttural *ṅa* begins to appear instead of the *anusvāra* before *śa* and *ha*[281]. (4) The left limb of *sa* often becomes a loop[282], as had happened already in some Kushāna inscriptions[283]. A substitute for the loop is the triangle, which occurs in the inscriptions of the Maukharis[284] and Aṁśuvarman[285]. (5) The occurrence of the southern *ḷa*[286]. And lastly (6) the occurrence of the first certain *Virāma* (see *ddham*)[287], consisting of a horizontal stroke above the small final, the northern *Jihvāmūlya* (*hka*)[288] and the *Upadhmānya* (*bpā*)[289].

The differences between the eastern and western varieties of the Gupta alphabet appear in the signs for *la, sha* and *ha*. In the eastern variety the left limb of *la* is turned sharply downwards[290]. Further, the base-stroke of *sha* is made round and attached as a loop to the slanting central bar[291]. Finally, the base-stroke of *ha* is suppressed, and its hook, attached to the vertical, is turned sharply to the left[292]. In the western variety these three letters have the older and the fuller forms.

The western variety of the Gupta alphabet, again, appears in two forms, a cursive round-hand and an angular, monumental type. The second form which shows very characteristic thick top-lines and a hooked *ra* is represented by the alphabet of the Bilsad *praśasti* of 415 A.D.[293] Another fine example is found in the Meharauli iron pillar inscription of Chandra[294]. Specimens of the cursive forms are found in the Indōr copper-

plate[295] of 465 A.D., Tōramāna's Kura inscription[296] probably of the first quarter of the 6th century and other inscriptions[297].

A good number of epigraphs belonging to the Gupta period, found mostly from the central parts of India and the Deccan, are written in what is known as the 'the script of Central India', which has been considered a variety of the Southern alphabets by Bühler[298]. He observes: "The Central-Indian script is found fully developed in the inscriptions of Samudragupta at Ēraṇ and of Chandragupta II at Udayagiri, on the copper-plates of the kings of Śarabhapura, of the Vākāṭakas, and of Tivara king of Kosala, and in two early Kadamba inscriptions. In all these documents, the heads of the letters bear small squares, which are either hollow or filled in. These squares, to which on account of their resemblances to small boxes the script owes the name "box-headed", are, like the wedges, artificial developments of the *Serif*. The solid, filled in squares probably have been invented by writers who used ink, and the hollow ones by persons writing with a *stilus*, who feared to tear their palm leaves"[299].

Siddhamātrikā

Another script of our concern is the Siddhamātrikā which was evolved from the western variety of the Gupta alphabet by about the beginning of the 6th century. The salient features of this alphabet are: (1) The letters slope from the right to the left, and show acute angles at the lower or at the right ends. (2) The tops of the verticals or slanting lines invariably bear small wedges, and their ends either show the same ornaments or protuberances on the right. (3) There is a tendency towards ornamentation which is seen in the top strokes of medial *ɪ, ē*, etc.

The first step in the development of the Siddhamātrikā during the 6th century is marked by the Bōdh-Gayā inscription[300] of 588-89 A.D., the Lākhāmaṇḍal *praśasti*[301] of about the same period and the other contemporaneous cognate inscriptions. All the above mentioned characteristic features of the Siddhamātrikā alphabet are clearly witnessed in the letters of these epigraphs.[302]

The further progress of the Siddhamātrikā alphabet during the 7th century is seen in the letters of the Banskhēra plate[303] of Harsha, dated in 628 A.D., and of the nearly contemporaneous Aphsad *praśasti*[304] of Ādityasēna. In the letters of these records we notice that the characteristic features of the Siddhamātrikā alphabet become clearer. The rightward curve of the small tail at the bottom of the upright strokes is clearly seen in the medial *ɪ mātrās* of the letters *ri* (in *vairi-nāri*, l.3), *śi* (in *payaḥ-śītē=pi*, l.4), etc., of the Aphsad *praśasti*. The lower ends of the upright strokes take a curve to the left side when the stroke is applied to the left of the letter as in medial short *i*. This is witnessed in *di* (in *Vāsudēvād=iva*, ll.11-12), *śi* (in *śikhayā*, l.18), etc., of the same record. At times these strokes form an arc or semicircle as in the letters *li* (in *valinō*, ll.14-15), *ki* (in *kiṇa-granthi*, l.3), *strim* (in *nistriṁś-ōtkhāta*, l.21), etc., of the same record. The triangular head-marks are present, throughout in these two inscriptions, as also

the sloping of the letters from the right to the left. Lastly, the tendency towards ornamentation is also seen in the top-strokes of medial *é*, etc. Examples of this tendency are to be found in the letters *gē* (in *mṛigēndrāyitam*, l.1), *tō* (in *unnatō*, l.1), etc., of the Aphasad *praśasti*. These features are even more prominently present in the Banskhēra copper-plate.

From the 8th century onwards the development of the Siddhamātrikā alphabet progresses more and more towards its successor, the Nāgarī alphabet, and by the beginning of the 10th century this alphabet yields place to the Nāgarī and regional scripts of North India.

Kharōṣṭhī

Another script that was employed for the epigraphical records pertaining to the period of our study is Kharōṣṭhī. Unlike Brāhmī it was written from right to left. The Brāhmī script was employed throughout the length and breadth of the Indian subcontinent. In course of time this script underwent numerous changes and ultimately evolved into vernacular scripts not only in India but also in Ceylon, Burma and Tibet. But the Kharōṣṭhī is an ephemeral, chiefly epigraphic, alphabet of North-Western India. The majority of the inscriptions written in Kharōṣṭhī have been found between 69° - 73° 30' E. Long. and 33°-35° N. Lat., in the ancient province of Gandhāra, the eastern region of modern Afghanistan and the Northern Punjab; and the oldest documents are confined to the districts the capitals of which were Taxila to the east of the Indus, and Pushkalāvatī to the west of the river. Single inscriptions have turned up further south-west in Bahāwalpur near Multān, south in Mathurā, and south-east in Kāngrā, and single words or letters in Bhārhut, Ujjain and Karnataka (Siddāpura Aśokan edicts). Coins, cameos and manuscripts with Kharōṣṭhī characters have been carried much further north and north-east.

The period during which Kharōṣṭhī seems to have been used in India, according to Bühler[305], extends from the 4th century B.C. to about the 3rd century A.D., the earliest letters occurring on the Persian *sigoli* and the latest perhaps on the Gandhāra sculptures and the Kushāṇa inscriptions. As regards the upper limit of the use of the Kharōṣṭhī script Dani[306] holds that the earliest inscriptions in this script are those of Aśoka (middle of the 3rd century B.C.) found at Shābāzagaṛhī and Mānsehrā.

Even after the 3rd century A.D. the use of the Kharōṣṭhī script seems to have continued in a few private records[307], the latest Kharōṣṭhī inscriptions in the subcontinent being two small Taxila records of about the 5th century A.D.[308] But before the 6th century A.D., the use of this script died not only out of the north-western region of the Indian subcontinent but also out of Afghanistan[309]. According to Sircar, this script disappeared from Indian epigraphy as it was not quite suitable for writing Sanskrit or Prakrit[310]. However, the fact appears to be one of the bigger fish swallowing the smaller one. Since Brāhmī and its developed alphabet was in use in

an overwhelmingly wider area of the subcontinent and was more suited to Indo-Aryan phonetics, it was but natural that its area of application spread further at the expense of Kharōṣṭhī.

The characteristics of the Kharōṣṭhī script have been stated thus by Bühler : "In spite of its frequent utilisation for epigraphic documents the Kharoshthi is a popular script, destined for clerks and men of business. This is proved by the throughout highly cursive character of the letters, by the absence of long vowels, which are useless for the purposes of common daily life, by the expression of groups of unaspirated double consonants by single ones (*ka* for *kka*) and of unaspirated and aspirated ones by the latter alone (*kha* for *kkha*), and by the invariable use of the *Anusvāra* for all vowelless medial nasals. The discovery of the Khotan MS. makes it very improbable that there existed another form of the script which, being more similar to the Brāhmī in completeness, would have been more suitable for the Brahmanical Śāstras"[311].

Bühler's theory that the Kharōṣṭhī script originated from the Aramaic alphabet[312] has been accepted by most of the scholars[313].

Diringer observes : "'It is now commonly accepted that the Kharoshthi script has descended from the Aramaic alphabet; this theory is based on two important facts, the likeness of many signs having similar phonetic value, and the direction of writing. The connections of the Aramaens with India have been proved by the Aramaic inscription found at Taxila on the Hydaspes of the third century B.C. The Kharoshthi script, however, must have originated in the fifth century B.C., in north-western India, at that time under Persian rule, which was the best medium for the spread of the Aramaic speech and script"[314]. Regarding the possible role of the Brāhmī script in the evolution of Kharōṣṭhī this scholar remarks : "It may be assumed that the Brāhmī had some influence on the origin or evolution of the Kharoshthi, especially: (1) in regard to the vocalization of the script, the vowels being indicated by small circles, dashes, modifications of strokes, and so forth, which in appearance transforms the script into a syllabic writing; (2) the addition of signs for sounds (such as *bh*, *gh*, *dh*) which do not exist in Aramaic; and (3) the direction of writing in the later stage of Kharoshthi"[315].

Pandey[316] having critically examined Bühler's theory of the Aramaic origin of the *Kharōṣṭhī* script categorically rejects it. He observes : "Keeping all the circumstances in view it can be safely maintained that the *Kharōṣṭhī* script originated in the north-west part of India and, as it is recorded in Chinese traditions, it was invented by an Indian genius whose nickname was *Kharoṣṭha*, as the letters resembled ass-lips"[317]. At another place this scholar states that really speaking, there was nothing foreign about Kharōṣṭhī, and that it had its origin, rise and fall in India[318].

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271. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), p. 205.
272. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, p. 302.
273. C. Sivaramamurti, *IESIS.*, p. 170.
274. *IP(D).*, p. 204.
275. *IP(B).*, pp. 64-65.
276. *IE(R).*, p. 74.
277. *IPT.*, Table IV , Cols. I-VII.

278. *Ibid.*, Cols. I and V, No. 3.
279. *Ibid.*, Col. VII, No. 3.
280. *Ibid.*, Col. IX, No. 3.
281. *Ibid.*, Col. VII, No. 11.
282. *Ibid.*, Cols. I-III, V, VI and VIII, No. 38.
283. *Ibid.*, Table III, Col. IV, No. 37.
284. *Ibid.*, Table IV , Cols. XI and XII, No. 38.
285. *Ibid.*, Col. XVII, No. 38.
286. *Ibid.*, Cols. I-III, No. 40.
287. *Ibid.*, Col. VII, No. 43.
288. *Ibid.*, Col. II, No, 46.
289. *Ibid.*, Col. III, No. 46.
290. *Ibid.*, Cols. I-III, V and VI, No. 34.
291. *Ibid.*, Cols. I-III and V, No. 37.
292. *Ibid.*, Cols. I-III, V and VI, No. 39.
293. *Ibid.*, Col. IV
294. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III (Rev.), No. 12 and plate XII.
295. *Ibid.*, No. 30 and plate XXX.
296. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, pp. 238 ff. and plate facing p. 240.
297. *IP(B).*, p. 66.
298. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.
299. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
300. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No. 71.
301. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. I, pp. 10 ff. and plate facing p. 12.
302. *IPT.*, Table IV , Cols. XIII-XIV.
303. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, pp. 208 ff. and plate facing p. 210.
304. *C.I.I.*, Vol. III, No. 42, plate XXVIII.
305. *IP(B).*, p. 35.
306. *IP(D).*, p. 252.
307. *Ibid.*, pp. 252-53.
308. *IE(S).*, p. 206.

309. *Ibid.*
310. D.C. Sircar, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*. p. 25.
311. *IP(B).*, p. 35.
312. *Ibid.*, pp. 35 ff.
313. *IP(D).*, p. 255; D.R. Bhandarkar, *Aśoka*, p. 242; *IE(S).*, p. 205.
314. *Alphabet.*, p. 302.
315. *Ibid.*, pp. 303-04. No. (3) in this quotation pertains to some later Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions which are found written from left to right (*vide Alphabet*, p. 302).
316. *IP(P).*, Part I, p. 53 ff.
317. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
318. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

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INDEX

(Figures refer to page numbers and the following abbreviations have been used)

au	=	author	*MS.*	=	manuscript / manuscripts
Bud.	=	Buddhist	*n.*	=	name
ca.	=	capital	*off.*	=	officer / office
ch.	=	chief	*PE.*	=	Pillar Edict / Edicts
co.	=	country	*peo.*	=	people
comm.	=	community	*pr.*	=	prince
cp.	=	copper-plate	*prov.*	=	province
de.	=	deity	*q.*	=	queen
di.	=	district	*r.*	=	ruler
dy.	=	dynasty	*reg.*	=	region
epi.	=	epithet	*rel.*	=	religion / religious
f.	=	female	*ri.*	=	river
fa.	=	family	*s.a.*	=	same as
feud.	=	feudatory	*sac.*	=	sacrifice
ins.	=	inscription / inscriptions	*Skt.*	=	Sanskrit
k.	=	king	*t.d.*	=	territorial division
l.	=	locality	*te.*	=	temple
lang.	=	language	*tea.*	=	teacher
l.m.	=	land measure	*tit.*	=	title
m.	=	male	*tn.*	=	town
min.	=	minister	*tr.*	=	tribe
mod.	=	modern	*v.*	=	village
MRE.	=	Minor Rock Edict / Edicts	*wk.*	=	work

A

Abottabad *ins.* of the time of Kadambēśvaradāsa, 226, 265
Abhayamitra, *Bud.* monk, 180
Abhidharma-piṭaka, *wk.*, 159
Abhijñāña-Śākuntalam, *wk.*, 274
Ābhīra, *fa.*, 42
Abhisāraprastha, *tn.*, 8
Abhūhōlā, *f.*, 93
āchāras, regulations, 76
āchārasthiti-pātra, list of regulations, 76, 95
āchārya, *tea.*, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 181
Āchārya Guhanandin, Jaina *tea.*, 196
Āchārya Sarppasēna, Jaina *tea.*, 197
Āchārya Sōmatrāta, *tea.*, 157, 207
āchāryōpādhyāya, *tea.*, 158
āchaya, collection, 189
Achintya-Purusha, Inscrutable Being *i.e.* Vishṇu, 206
Aḍhabhāra plates of Mahā-Nannarāja, 206, 276
āḍhaka, measure of capacity, 136, 137
āḍhavāpa, *l.m.*, 137
adhikapada, redundancy, 269
adhikaraṇa, *off.*, 15, 17, 18, 20, 49
adhikaraṇa, court, 71, 72
adhikaraṇa, judge, 71
adhikaraṇabhōjaka, a court-dignitary, 71
adhishṭhāna, *tn.*, 20
adhishṭhān-ādhikaraṇa, *off.*, 18, 20, 49
adhishṭhān-ādhikaraṇa, court of justice situated in a *tn.*, 71
adhyaksha, *off.*, 4
ādikartṛi, *s.a. tīrthaṅkara*, 196
Āditya, Sun-god, 225
Ādityasēna, *k.*, 107
Ādityavardhana, Pushpabhūti, *k.*, 225
Ādityavarman, Maukhari *k.*, 57, 154
Afghanistan, *co.*, 1, 185, 257, 290
Agastik-āgrahāra, 165
Agiśala, architect, 179
Agisimā (Agniśarmā), *m.*, 110
agnihōtra, maintenance of the sacred fire, 87, 232
Agnimitra, Śuṅga *pr.*, 7
agrahāra, community of learned Brāhmaṇas, 125, 126, 160, 165, 166
agrahāra, centre of Brahminical studies, 165
agrahāra of Nālandā, 224
agramahishī, chief *q.*, 9, 10, 92, 93
aguru, *Amyris Agallocha*, 233
āhāra, *t.d.*, 25, 27, 29
āharaṇī, *t.d.*, 25, 26
Ahichchhatra, *tn.*, 218
Ahichchhatra-bhukti, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 29
āhnika mantra, 229
Ahraurā *M.R.E.* I, 175
Aihole *ins.* of Polekēśi II, 56, 282
Aindrī or Indrāṇī or Māhendrī, *mātṛikā*, 219
Aitarēya-Brāhmaṇa, *wk.*, 200
Ajamitra, *m.*, 95, 96
Ajitavardhana, *k.*, 273
ajīva, non-soul, 191

Ājīvikas, *rel.* sect, 5, 190, 198, 235
Ājīvikism, *rel.*, 198
akhadaṁsa s.a. akshadarśaka, *off.*, 66
akshadarśaka, *off.*, 66
akshapaṭalika, *off.*, 24.
akshapaṭalādhikṛita, *off.*, 48
Akshasaraka, *vi.*, 26
Akshasaraka-maṇḍalī, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 26
Akshasaraka-prāpa, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 26
akshayanīvī, perpetual endowment, 68, 124
alaṁkāra, figure of speech, 278, 279
Alaṁkāra-śāstra, *Skt.* poetics, 267, 282
Alexander, Mecedonian *k.*, 283
Alīnā *cp. ins.* of Śīlāditya VII, 89, 154
Aliya-vasāni, *wk.*, 159
Allahābād, *tn.*, 2
Allahābād Municipal Museum Yūpa *ins.*, 200, 214, 264
Allahābād Musuem *ins.* of the time of Bhadramagha, 95, 141
Allahābād pillar *ins.* of Samudragupta, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 24, 44, 45, 47, 49, 50, 58, 87, 90, 101, 104, 206, 207, 214, 268, 287
Altekar A.S., 11, 15, 28, 68, 71, 96, 108, 200, 268
amacha or *amachcha* (*Skt. amātya*), *off.* or *min.*, 3, 7
Amara, *wk.*, 9
amātya, *off.*, 9, 10
amātya, *min.*, 7, 42, 92, 107
Amarāvatī, *vi.*, 142, 159
Ambala, *di.*, 2
Amitābha Buddha, one of the Dhyāni Buddhas, 187
Amohāāsī, *vihāra* of, 164
Āmradvīpa, *l.*, 181
Āmrakāradava, *off.*, 180
Amrēlī Museum plates of Dhruvasēna II, 125
Aṁtiyaka (Antiochus II), Greek *k.*, 2
Anāgata-bhayāni, *wk.*, 159
Anak-āgrahāra, 166
Ananta-Nārāyaṇa, Vishṇu, 160, 167, 209, 233
Ananta-Nārāyaṇa *te.*, 160
Anantasvāmin, Vishṇu, 208, 212
Anantavarman, Maukhari *k.*, 57, 88, 154, 215
Ananthapur, *di.*, 1
Ānarta, *reg.*, 9
Ānarttapura, *tn.*, 166
Andhau *ins.*, 9
Āndhra, kingdom, 57
Andhra Pradesh, state, 1, 260
Aṅgadīya-Vishaya, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 29
Aṅgas, *wk.*, 191
Aṅguttara-nikāya, *wk.*, 159
Anikatos (*Apaḍihata*), *tit.*, 8
Aniruddha, one of the *pañchavīras*, 205
anta, bordering kings, 85
antādi, a poetic phenomenon, 276, 280
antamahāmātra, *off.*, 4, 5, 6
antapāla, *off.*, 4
Antarvēdī, name of a *t.d.*, 15, 19

antēvāsin, disciple, 156, 158
Antialkidas, Greek, *k.*, 203
anugrahasthiti-pātra, *s.a. āchārasthiti-pātra*, 76
anulōma, a type of inter-caste marriage, 91, 92
anutpannādāna-samudgrāhaka, *off.*, 22, 24
apachaya, the loss, 189
Aphsad *ins.* of Ādityasēna, 57, 100, 107, 167, 209, 212, 289, 290
Apollodotus, Indo-Greek *r.*, 212
Apracharāja, *tit.*, 8
apradā, gift-land not to be alienated, 125, 126, 127
aprahata, waste-land, 126
Apratiratha, *tit.*, 45, 50
Aprativārya-vīrya, *tit.*, 45
Apte, 47, 66, 126, 137, 156, 167
Āptōryāma, sacrifice, 200
Ārā *ins.* of Kanishka II, 95, 106
Ārā *ins.* of the year 41, 12
Arabs, *peo.*, 52
Arabian sea, 27
araghaṭṭa, water-drawing device, 129, 136
Araha, *m.*, 110
Arahadāsa, *m.*, 110
Arahaka, *m.*, 110
arahaṁta, one who has cast off migration, 191
Arahapālita, *m.*, 110
ārakshika (ārakshaka), *off.*, 73
ārāma, a monastery or a garden, 107, 181, 187, 272
Aramaens, *peo.*, 291
Aramaic, *lang.*, 256
Aramaic, script, 256, 284, 291
Aranātha, 18th *tirthaṅkara*, 193
Āraṅg plates of Mahāsudēvarāja, 112
Āraṇyakūpagiri, *l.*, 134, 232
Araṇyavāsini, Durgā, 221, 231, 232, 234
Āraṭṭa, *co.*, 56
Ardhanārīśvara, composite form of Śiva and Pārvati, 216, 220, 274
Ardoksho (Lakshmi), *de.*, 179
arhat, *Bud.* or Jaina monk, 97, 194, 195, 196, 197, 235
Arishṭanēmi (Nēminātha), 2nd *tirthaṅkara*, 193
ariyasachcha, fundamental doctrine of the Buddha, 188
Ārōgya-vihāra, *n.* of a monastery, 108
Arthālaṁkāra, figure of speech of sense, 269, 271, 272, 275, 277, 280
arthaśāstra, polity, 162
Arthaśāstra, *wk.*, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 14, 17, 39, 51, 63, 64, 66, 68, 84, 94, 110, 122, 130
Arya=Vaiśya, caste, 85
ārya, venerable, 215, 270, 272
Ārya-Cheṭika-kula, Jaina sect, 193
Ārya-Hāliya-kula, Jaina sect, 192
Āryakula, Jaina sect, 197
Aryamna, *min.*, 107
Ārya-Nāgabhuktikiya-kula, Jaina sect, 193
Aryans, *peo.*, 284
Aryan invasion, 284
Ārya-saṁgha, Jaina sect, 187

Ārya Uditāchārya, Pāśupata *tea.*, 214, 215
Āryavajri-śākhā, Jaina sect, 192
Asāḍa, *m.*, 110
āsana-paṭṭa, seat, 143
asavāraka, *off.*, 41
asavārika, *off.*, 41
Āshāḍha, lunar month, 217
Āshāḍhaka, *vi.*, 111
Ashrāfpur *cp. ins.* of Dēvakhaḍga, 138, 183
Ashṭādhyāyi, *wk.*, 51
ashṭakul-ādhikaraṇa, *off.*, 21
ashṭakul-ādhikaraṇa, Village Administrative Board, 71
ashṭakulika, *s.a. ashṭakul-ādhikaraṇa*, 71
ashṭapushpikā, offering of eight or eight kinds of flowers, 89, 233
Asirgarh seal, 182, 216
Asirgarh copper-seal *ins.* of Śarvavarman, 216
Aśoka, Mauryan, *k.*, 1, 2, 3, 27, 39, 40, 63, 64, 65, 66, 85, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 106, 108, 110, 123, 128, 131, 159, 164, 175, 176, 177, 182, 183, 184, 188, 190, 198, 199, 255, 257, 283
Aśokan Brāhmi, *s.a.* Early Brāhmi, 257, 285
Aśokan Edicts, 255, 256, 261, 265, 284, 285
Aśokan *ins.* in Aramaic characters, 1
Aśpavarman, Indo-Greek *k.*, 8
āśrama, social order, 84, 85
āśrama, hermitage, 168
Assam, state, 280
Assyrian weights, 284
Aśvadēva, *m.*, 229
aśvādhyaksha, *off.*, 14
Aśvamēdha, *n.* of a *sac.*, 44, 45, 199, 201, 202, 204, 206
Aśvamēdha-parākrama, *tit.*, 45
aśvapati, *off.*, 48, 101
aśvārōha, horseman, 14, 55
Aśvavātāyana, *n.* of a *gōtra*, 92
Aśyala or Suśyala, *m.*, 13
Āṭavyas, *peo.*, 2
Atharvavēda, *wk.*, 160
Atimutaka, *n.* of a *gōtra*, 95
atithi, hospitality to guests, 232
Atyantabhagavadbhakta, *epi.*, 206
Audumbar-āgrahāra, 165
Audumbara coins, 212, 213
aurṇasthānika, superintendent of a wool factory, 102, 136
avalōkki, *off.*, 22, 24, 75, 76
Avanti, *co.*, 111
Avanti, *off.*, 56
Avanti-Vikramōpādhyāya, *m.*, 111
āvāta, tax, 131, 132
avatāra, incarnation, 211, 219
Avimuktēśvara, *n.* of Śiva, 168, 216
Avisinā, *f.*, 94
Aya (Ārya), *epi.*, 95
āyagapaṭa, tablet of homage, 194
āyagasabhā, hall of homage, 97
Ayasia Kumuïa, *q.*, 178
āyatana, *te.*, 194
Ayōdhyā, *tn.*, 87

Ayōdhyā *ins.* of Dhanadēva, 7, 41, 85, 264, 265
āyukta, s.a. āyuktaka, off., 17, 18
āyuktaka, off., 22, 23
Ayyabhyisita-kula, Jaina sect, 192
Azilises, Indo-Greek *k.*, 42
Azis I, Indo-Greek *k.*, 42
Azes II, Indo-Greek *k.*, 8, 42

B

Badagaṅgā Rock *ins.* of Bhūtivarman, 202
Baḍvā, *vi.*, 200
Baḍvā *yūpa ins.*, 200, 265
Bagchi P.C., 189
Bahadata (Brahmadatta), *m.*, 110
Bahasatimitra, Magadhan, *k.*, 190
Bahāwalpur, *tn.*, 43, 290
Bahuśrutiya, *Bud.* sect, 185, 186
Bahuśrutiyaka, *Bud.* sect, 184
Bahvṛich (Rigvēda), wk., 160
Baigrām *cp. ins.* of the Gupta year 128, 19, 127, 137, 139, 207
Bairāṭ *MRE.* of Aśoka, 2, 258
Bajaur relic-casket *ins.*, 177, 257
Bakanapati, *m.*, 12, 86
Bala, *off.*, 200
Bala, *m.*, 12, 95
Balabhadra, *de.*, 211
Balabhadra, *m.*, 209
Balabhadrasvāmin, *de.*, 209
Baladēva, *de.*, 229
balādhikaraṇa, off., 16, 45, 49
balādhikaraṇādhikṛita, off., 49
balādhikṛita, off., 10, 22, 42, 54, 55, 56, 224
Balādhikṛita Sālapaksha, 224
Bālāditya, *k.*, 165
Bālādityadēva, Magadhan *k.*, 86
Balaka, *m.*, 111
Balamitra, *m.*, 111
Balasiṁha, *m.*, 200
Balavardhana, *m.*, 200
Baldev Kumar, 179
Bali, demon *k.*, 211
bali, offering of food to creatures, 89, 166, 222, 224, 230, 232, 234
bali, tax, 123, 130, 131, 175
Balkh, *reg.*, 43
Bamhani plates of Bharatabala, 74
Bāṇa, *au.*, 27, 56, 78, 79, 136, 225, 233, 267, 276
Bandhumitra, itinerary trader, 20
Banerjea J.N., 212, 213
Banerjee A.D., 186
Banerjee P., 191, 199, 204, 205
Banerji R.D., 10, 43, 63, 66, 214, 228, 234, 263
Bangladesh, *co.*, 196
Bania, merchant, 208
Banskhēra plate of Harsha, 27, 29, 56, 89, 218, 225, 289, 290
Bāpaka, Kshatrapa, *r.*, 10
Bāpaka, *off.*, 42
Bappa-bhōgika, *off.*, 22, 54
Barābar Hill cave *ins.* of Anantavarman, 209

Barābar Hill Cave *ins.* of Aśoka, 198
Bārāṇasī, *tn.*, 97
Barnālā *yūpa ins.*, 201, 206
Barua B.M., 66, 236, 262
Basāḍh, *vi.*, 15, 17
Basāḍh seal, 15, 16, 18, 48, 71, 72
Basāḍh seals, 14, 16, 49, 72, 73
Basak R.G., 19, 139, 257, 261
Bay of Bengal, 27
Bedadi copper-ladle *ins.*, 184, 185
Bellary, *di.*, 2
Benares sermon, 188
Bengal, *reg.*, 14, 27, 196, 207, 208, 223
Besnagar, *tn.*, 204
Besnagar Garuḍa pillar *ins.* of Heliodoros, 203, 230
Betul plates of Saṁkshōbha, 73, 87, 165
Bhābhrū Edict, 188
Bhadantadāsa, *Bud. tea.*, 181
Bhadra, composer, 278, 279
Bhadrāchārya, Jaina *tea.*, 197
Bhadrāryā, Pārvatī, 201, 220, 221
Bhadrapattanaka, *tn.*, 55
bhadrāsana, Jain symbol, 192
Bhadrēṇiyaka, *vi.*, 105, 166
Bhadrēṇiyaka grant of Śīlāditya I, 105, 166
Bhadrōpātta, *tn.*, 55
bhāga, tax, 130, 131, 132
bhāga-bhōga-kara, tax, 131
Bhagavadbhakta, tit., 207
Bhagavadgītā, wk., 206
Bhagavān, epi., 231
Bhagavat, tit., 203, 215, 237
Bhagavat, *n.* of Vishṇu, 209, 211, 212
Bhāgavata, epi., 205, 206, 209, 216
Bhāgavata ritual, 229
Bhāgavata shrine, 205
Bhagavatī, epi., of Lakshmī, 221
Bhāgavatism, 236
Bhagavatpād-ānudhyātā, epi., 207
Bhagavat Svāmi Nāga, *de.*, 228
Bhaginī Sumāgadhī, serpent goddess, 229
Bhakti school, 203
bhakti, l.m., 138
Bhamodra Mohōta plate of Drōṇasiṁha, 108, 222
Bhāna, *off.*, 29
Bhāṇḍaka, *off.*, 18
Bhanarkar D.R., 2, 4, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 28, 29, 40, 49, 50, 64, 65, 71, 85, 93, 94, 97, 105, 109, 125, 127, 131, 133, 137, 141, 158, 159, 176, 196, 201, 204, 206, 210, 212, 214, 215, 220, 231, 268, 269, 270, 271, 284
Bhānu Guptā, *f.*, 92, 96
Bhāradvāja, *gōtra*, 86, 200
Bharadvāja, *co.*, 56
Bharatpur state, 90
Bhāravi, *au.*, 268
Bhārhut, *vi.*, 290
Bhārhut Buddhist pillar *ins.*, 7, 93, 101
Bhārhut stūpa, 177, 182
Bhārhut stūpa *ins.*, 41, 141, 188, 228
Bharoach, *tn.*, 27
Bharukachchha, *tn.*, 55, 107

Bhāsa, *au.*, 11
Bhāshyas, *wk.*, 87
Bhāskara, Sun-god, 223, 224
Bhāskarasvāmi, *m.*, 162
Bhāskaravarman, *k.* of Kāmarūpa, 57, 58
bhaṭa, *off.*, 22, 23, 27, 29, 73, 74, 75, 78
Bhaṭārka, Maitraka, *r.*, 21, 26, 51, 53, 54, 55
Bhaṭāraka-bhēda, *t.d.*, ? 26
bhaṭāśvapati, *off.*, 16, 46, 47, 48
bhaṭṭa, learned Brāhmaṇa, 158
Bhattacharya B.C., 194
Bhaṭṭācharya Padmanatha, 79
Bhaṭṭāraka, *feud.*, 272
Bhaṭṭārikā-dēvī, *tit.*, 94
Bhaṭṭārikā-Mahādēvī, *tit.*, 94
Bhaṭṭi Kāvya, *wk.*, 274
Bhaṭṭisōma, *m.*, 196
bhatudēsaka, distributor of food, 101
Bhava, Śiva, 217
Bhāvanagar plates of Dharasēna III, 106, 130, 134
Bhavānī, Pārvati, 220, 221
Bhayamta, *epi.*, 95
bhikshu, *Bud.* monk, 176, 180
bhikshuṇis or *bhichchuṇis*, *Bud.* nuns, 95
bhikshu-saṃgha, *Bud.* order, 109, 181, 186
Bhiṭā, *vi.*, 226
Bhiṭā seal, 48, 226
Bhiṭā terracotta seal-die, 132
Bhitari *ins.* of Skandagupta, 45, 96, 105, 208, 231
bhōga, tax, 22, 124, 130, 131, 132
bhōgakara, tax, 131
bhōgadharaṇika, *off.*, 22, 23
bhōgika, *off.*, 22, 23
bhōgōddharaṇika, *off.*, 23
Bhojaka or *Bhoja*, Śaka or Maga-Brāhmaṇa, 86
Bhojaka-Brāhmaṇas, *comm.*, 83
Bhōṭuka, *m.*; 125
Bhōyila, *m.*, 222
Bhrigu, *au.*, 67
bhṛita, = *Śūdra*, caste, 85
bhṛitaka, hired labourer, 85
bhukti, *t.d.*, 15, 18, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30
Bhuluṇḍa, *feud.*, 272, 273
bhūmi, *t.d.*, 25
Bhūtapati, Śiva, 220
bhūtavātaprapratyāya, tax, 131, 132
Bhuvana, *m.*, 229
Bihar, state, 2, 43, 197
Bihar stone pillar *ins.* of Budhagupta, 165, 201, 220
Bihar Kotra *ins.* of Aulikara Naravarman, 181
Bijayagadh stone pillar *ins.* of Vishnuvardhana, 201
Bilsad stone pillar *ins.* of the regin of Kumāragupta, 17, 103, 201, 227
Bilsad praśasti of 415 A.D., 288
Bilsad *ins.*, 50
Biruda, a kind of Sanskrit composition, 270
Bloch, 105
Bōdhadatta, *min.*, 10, 42
Bōdh-Gayā, *tn.*, 180, 188

Bōdh-Gayā *ins.* of Mahānāman, 181, 289
Bōdh-Gayā *ins.* of 588-89 A.D., 155, 159, 181
Bōdhisatva, 94, 180, 184, 187
Bōdhisatva image *ins.* of Kanishka's 3rd year, 156
Bōdhisēna, *Bud.* monk, 181
Bōdhi tree, 180, 188
Bōndā plates of Mahāśiva Tivara, 111, 157
Box-headed, *s.a.* Central Indian script, 289
Brahmachārin, *m.*, 277
Brahmadāsika-kula, Jaina sect, 192
Brahmadatta, *m.*, 15
brahmadāya or *brahmadēya*, land grants to Brāhmanas, 166
brahmadēya, land grants to Brāhmaṇas, 126
Brahman, *de.*, 274
Brāhmaṇa, *wk.*, 202
Brāhmaṇa, caste, 84, 92
Brāhmaṇas, *comm.*, 5, 85, 86, 87, 99, 124, 125, 126, 142, 158, 160, 165, 166, 167, 183, 190, 196, 198, 202, 208, 223, 232, 235
Brahmanical triad, 202
Brahminical religion, 180, 202, 265
Brahmanical Vedic religion, 200
Brahmanism, 177, 179, 195, 229, 236
Brahmaṇya dharma, 91
Brahmaputrā, *ri.*, 27
Brāhmī or Brahmāṇī, *mātṛikā*, 219
Brāhmī, script, 161, 213, 256, 257, 283, 284, 285, 290, 291
Brāhmī *ins.* from Kirāri, 14, 101, 141, 162
brihadaśvavāra, *off.*, 56
Brihadratha, Mauryan *k.*, 40
Brihaspati, *au.*, 69, 71
Brihaspati, divine preceptor, 154
Brihatkathākōśa, *wk.*, 196
Brindavan Manmohan temple brick inscriptions, 204
British Museum *ins.* of Kanishka, 219, 228
Buddha, 2, 101, 103, 123, 130, 163, 174, 175, 176, 178, 179, 180, 181, 187, 188, 189, 257
Buddhabhaṭa, *m.*, 55
Buddhadēva, *Bud.*, *tea.*, 155
Buddhamitra, *Bud.* monk, 180
Buddhamitrā, *Bud.* nun, 94, 95
Buddhism, 2, 40, 93, 97, 110, 111, 130, 155, 156, 158, 159, 164, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 185, 187, 188, 195, 198, 199, 212, 218, 225, 228, 229, 235, 236, 265
Buddhists, *comm.*, 5, 98, 111, 158, 165, 183, 190, 194, 198, 202
Buddhist *Āgamas*, *wk.*, 189
Buddhist cave *ins.* from Kaṇhēri and Kudā, 108
Buddhist India, *wk.*, 133
Buddhist *ins.* from Amarāvati, 155
Buddhist sects, 185
Budhagupta, Gupta *k.*, 21, 231, 236
Budhāvāsa, residence of the Buddha, 189
Budhila, *m.*, 110
Bühler G., 3, 24, 25, 26, 40, 68, 85, 91, 98, 105, 111, 192, 193, 194, 203, 212, 229, 263, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 284, 286, 288, 290, 291

Burma, *co.*, 290
Burnell A.C., 283
Būṭā, *f.*, 97

C

Calcutta Bairāṭ Rock *ins.*, 159, 174
Canon Taylor, 284
Central India, *reg.*, 14
Central variety of the Gupta alphabet, 288
Ceylon, *co.*, 40, 177, 180, 290
Chachcha, *m.*, 125
Chaikāmbaka or Ekāmbaka, *vi.*, 166, 230
chaitya, Bud. place of worship, 140
Chakrabhṛit, Vishṇu, 208, 212
Chakradhara (Vishṇu), *de.*, 182
Chakragadādhara, n. of Vishṇu, 212
Chakrapālita, *r.*, 107, 129, 208
Chakrapāni, Vishṇu, 207, 212
Chakrasvāmin, n. of Vishṇu, 212
Chakrasvāmidāsāgra, epi., 207
Chakravartin, tit., 40, 42, 52, 57, 129
Chakravarti N.P., 129
Chakravarti P.C., 77
Chālukyas of Bādāmi, *dy.*, 52
champū, type of *Skt.* composition, 270
Chāmuṇḍā, *mātṛikā*, 219
Chāndaka brothers, actors, 105, 228
Chandanavāṭaka, *vi.*, 112
Chaṇḍikā, *de.*, 221
Chandra *s.a.* Chandragupta II, Gupta *k.*, 50, 197, 230
Chandrabhaṭṭi, *off.*, 54
Chandragupta Maurya, *k.*, 1, 2, 39, 110, 128, 190
Chandragupta I, Gupta *k.*, 92, 269
Chandragupta II, Gupta *k.*, 16, 17, 44, 45, 47, 50, 74, 92, 93, 94, 96, 103, 109, 162, 180, 206, 207, 208
Chandragupta Vikramāditya, Gupta *k.*, 14
Chandraprabha, *tirthaṅkara*, 197
chāra, off., 5
charu or *charuka*, oblation of boiled rice to the gods and the manes, 89, 166, 222, 224, 230, 232, 234
Charter of Guhasēna of year 240, 163
Charter of Vishṇushēṇa, 75, 76, 100, 133, 134, 135, 137, 139, 140, 141, 144, 202
chāṭa, off., 22, 23, 27, 29, 73, 74, 75, 78
Chatterjee A.K., 196, 197
Chattopadhyay Bhaskar, 8, 11, 12, 13, 43, 44, 69
Chattopadhyaya S., 86, 91
Chaturbhuja, epi. of Vishṇu, 208, 210
Chashṭana, Kshatrapa *k.*, 9, 164
chatur-Buddhāsana, place where images of four Buddhas are seated, 180, 187
chāturvaidyasamūha, comm. of Brāhmaṇas versed in the four Vēdas, 160
chaturvēdin, versed in the four Vēdas, 87, 158
chāturvidya, versed in the four Vēdas, 89, 166, 167
chāturvidyasāmānya, comm. of Brāhmaṇas, versed in the four Vēdas, 165, 166
chauröddharaṇika, s.a. chauröddharaṇa, off., 16, 22, 73, 75
Chēdi, *dy.*, 66

Chēlla, Jaina mendicant, 197
Chhabra B.Ch., 69, 266, 268, 272
Chhaḍaśila, *vi.*, 189
Chhandōga (Sāmavēda), wk., 88, 160
Chhāndōga Ch. of a *śākhā*, 200
chhātra, a vedic student, 158, 159
chhimpaka (chhimpaya), dyer of clothes, 102, 141
Chhōṭi Sādṛi *ins.* of Gauri, 88, 166, 216, 220
Childers, 156
China, *co.*, 44
Chirātadatta, *m.* or *off.*, 15, 18, 20
Chitorgaṛh, *tn.*, 204
Chitradurga, *MRE.* of Aśoka, 2
Chitrakūṭasvāmin, Vishṇu, 208
Chōḍas, *peo.*, 2
chōra-daṇḍa, n. of a cess, 73, 74, 131, 132
Chuksha, *prov.*, 8
Chūlaviyūha-sutta, wk., 176
Cintra *praśasti*, 215
Classical Age, 282
Coomaraswamy A.K., *au.*, 140
copper-plate charters of Harsha, 165, 183
copper-plate charters of Parivrājaka Mahārāja Hastin, 216
copper-plate charters of Śaśāṅka, 182
copper-plate grant of Dharasēna IV, 187
copper-plate grant of Dharmāditya, 50
Council of Jaina monks, 191
Cunningham, 178, 179, 284
Cutch, *reg.*, 52
Cyrene, *co.*, 40, 177

D

Dabhaka, *vi.*, 106
Dadda I, Gurjara *k.*, 226
Dadda II, Gurjara *k.*, 226
Dadda III, Gurjara *k.*, 89, 226
Dadhikarṇa, Lord of Nāgas, 228, 229
Dadhimatı, Pārvatı, 221
Dadhimatı-Mātā *ins.*, 221
dadhi-kshıra-ghṛita-snapana, bathing with curds, milk and ghee, 233
ḍākinı, female ghoul, 220
dakshiṇā, sacrificial fee, 200, 201
Dakshiṇāmśa-vıthi, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 19
Dakshiṇāpatha, reg., 91
Dakshiṇanāyaka, one who loves more than one woman in Sanskrit poetry, 277
dākshiṇātya, a southerner, 282
Damitra = Greek Demetrios, *m.*, 195
Dāmōdara, composer, 277
Dāmōdara, *m.*, 277
Dāmōdarpur, *tn.*, 208
Dāmōdarpur *cp. ins.*, 15, 17, 19, 21, 29, 124, 125, 126, 127, 137, 139
Dāmōdarpur *cp. ins.* of Gupta year 224, 15, 18, 21, 46, 49
Dāmōdarpur *cp. ins.* of the reign of Budhagupta, 166, 209, 211
Dāmōdarpur *cp. ins.* of the reign of Vishṇugupta, 209
Dāmōdarpur records, 18, 20, 71, 112
damtakāra, worker in ivory, 103
daṃḍa, punishment, 65

Dānamitra, *r.*, 199
daṇḍa, staff, 215
dāṇḍabhōgika, *off.*, 22, 75
Daṇḍa-bhukti, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 79
daṇḍanāyaka, *off.*, 10, 12, 16, 28, 42, 44, 46, 69, 72, 76
daṇḍanīti, 153, 154
daṇḍapāś-ādhikaraṇa, *off.*, 20
dāṇḍapāśika, *off.*, 16, 22, 73, 75
dāṇḍika, *off.*, 16, 73
Daṇḍin, *au.*, 267, 276
daṇḍōparika, *off.*, 73
Dani A.H., 287, 288, 290
dapa, dance, 104, 153
darvikarman, measurer of land, 138
Das D.N., 66
Dāsa, *m.*, 208
dāsa, slave, 90
dāsa, temple-attendant, 234
dāsaka, fisherman, 98
daśāparādha, ten kinds of offences, 76
daśāparādha, tax, 131, 132
daśāparādhika, *off.*, 22, 24, 75, 76
Daśapura, *tn.*, 72, 87, 88, 102, 105, 107, 112, 135, 166, 207, 223, 224, 270
Daśaratha, mythic *k.*, 211
Daśaratha, Mauryan *k.*, 198
Dāśarathi Rāma, 211
Dashafota, *m.*, 95, 106
dāsī, female slave, 90
dāsī, temple-attendant, 234
Dati, *m.*, 228
Datka, *m.*, 125
Dattabhaṭa, *off.*, 107, 272
Dattilāchārya, Jaina *tea.*, 157, 195
daussādhasādhanika, *off.*, 27, 78
Deccan, *reg.*, 142
Deecke, 284
dēha, body, 191
Dehradun region, 201
Delhi - Tōprā Edicts, 258, 285, 286
Demetrios, Greek *k.*, 41
denarius, Roman coin, 139
Deo-Barnārk *ins.* of Jīvitagupta II, 16, 49, 50, 73
Dēogarh fort, 220
Dēogarh Rock *ins.* of Svāmibhaṭa, 220
Dēva, *off.*, 54
dēvadāsī, courtesan, 96, 97
dēvadāsī, temple-attendant, 234
Dēva-dēva, *epi.*, of Vāsudēva, 203
Devadinna, *m.*, 97
dēvadrōṇi, procession with idols, 234
dēvadrōṇy-ādhikṛita, *off.*, 234
Dēvagiri, *Bud. tea.*, 156
Devahuti D., 56
dēvakula, temple, 11, 167, 194, 209
dēvakula s.a. pitāmaha-dēvakula, royal portrait gallery for deceased kings, 11
dēvakulika, temple-attendant, 234
Dēvamitra, *k.*, 92
Dēvānampriya, *ep.*, 40
dēvaparichāraka, temple-attendant, 234

Dēvaputra, *tit.*, 11, 179, 200
Dēvarakshita, *m.*, 217
Dēvatā, *f.*, 180
dēvavārika, official incharge of temple estate, 234
Dēvavishṇu, *m.*, 223
Dēvī, *epi.*, 94, 194
Dēvī, *n.* of Pārvatī, 294, 220
Dēvī, *de.*, 166
dēvikarmāntika, official incharge of temple estate, 234
Dēvila, *m.*, 228
Dēvī-Māhātmya, section of Mārkaṇḍēya-Purāṇa, 221
Dhamaguta, *m.*, 110
Dhaṁma, 103, 176, 177
Dhaṁma-anugraha, benefit of morality, 176
Dhaṁma-dāna, a religious gift, 176
Dhaṁma-maṅgala, practice of morality, 176
Dhammapada, *wk.*, 261
Dhaṁma-Saṁvibhāga, distribution of morality, 176
Dhaṁma-yātrā, pilgrimage, 103
dhaṁṇīka, corn-dealer, 134, 143
Dhanabhūti's *ins.* at Bhārhut, 194, 286
Dhanadēva, *r.* of Ayōdhyā, 7, 227
Dhanaidaha *cp. ins.* of Kumāragupta I, 19,21
Dhanavatī, *Bud.* nun, 95
Dhank, *vi.*, 192
Dhanutrāta, *m.*, 200
dhānya, grain, 99, 110
dhānya, tax, 131, 132, 134
Dhanyavishṇu, *pr.*, ? 208
Dharapaṭṭa, Maitraka, *k.*, 22, 52, 216
Dharasēna, Maitraka *ch.*, 21, 22
Dharasēna I, Maitraka *k.*, 51, 55
Dharasēna II, Maitraka *k.*, 52, 55, 154
Dharasēna III, Maitraka *k.*, 52, 54
Dharasēna IV, Maitraka *k.*, 52, 55, 102, 154
Dharma, moral code as conceived by Aśoka, 3, 4, 5, 63, 95, 176, 177, 189
Dharma-chakra-pravartana, turning the wheel of law, 188
Dharmadēva-vihāra, 164
dharmādhikāra, *off.*, 72
Dharmaguptikas, *Bud.* sect, 185
Dharmaka, *Bud. tea.*, 155
dharmalipi, Aśokan Edicts, 161
dharmamahāmātra, *off.*, 5, 17, 64, 65, 85, 177, 190
Dharmanandin, *m.*, 123
Dharmarājika-stūpa, 187
dharmāsana, *off.*, 72
dharmāsanādhikaraṇa, *off.*, 71, 72
Dharmaśāstras, *wk.*, 79, 84, 87, 88, 152, 154, 155, 161
Dharmasōmā, *f.*, 94
dharmasthāna, *off.*, 72
dharmasūtra, *wk.*, 200
dharmāvasathin, *off.*, 5
Dharma-yātrā, tour for propagation of Dharma, 177
Dhauli RE. of Aśoka, 1, 175
dhāvaka, fore-runner, 14
Dhavashaṇḍikā, *vi.*, 222

dhūsachīva, min., 9
Dhṛitimitra, landlord, 20
Dhṛitipāla, trader, 20
Dhruvabhaṭa, Maitraka *k.*, 154
Dhruvabhūti, *off.*, 18, 47, 101
dhruvādhikaraṇika, off., 22, 24
Dhruvaśarman, *m.*, 17, 227
Dhruvasēna I, Maitraka *k.*, 51, 52, 54, 55, 76, 154, 198, 207, 216
Dhruvasēna II, Maitraka *k.*, 222, 280
Dhruvasēna III, Maitraka *k.*, 103, 281
Dhruvasēna IV, Maitraka, *k.*, 103
dhruvasthānādhikaraṇika, off., 24
Dhruvasvāmini, Gupta *q.*, 93, 94
dhūpa, offering of incense, 166, 188, 196, 224, 233, 235
dhvaja, flag, 213
Dhvaja, standard, 230
dhvaja-sthambha, flag-staff, 208, 230, 231
Dhyāni Buddha, 187
Digambara, Jaina school, 196, 198
Dīgha-nikāya, wk., 156, 159, 176
dīkshā, initiation, 217
Dikshitar V.R.R., 4, 5, 40, 43, 63, 70, 84
Dion, *m.*, 203
dīpa, offering of oil lamp, 166, 188, 196, 224, 233, 235
dīpataila, oil for lamp, 235
Diringer, 291
Diskalkar D.B., 24, 26, 134
Divākarasēna, Vākāṭaka *pr.*, 96
divira s.a. Persian *dabir*, clerk, 23
divirapati, off., 22, 23, 54
draṅga, t.d., 23, 25, 26
drāṅgika, off., 22, 23, 26
Dravidians, *peo.*, 284
drōṇa, measure of capacity, 137
Drōṇala, *m.*, 86, 200
Drōṇasimha, Maitraka, *k.*, 21, 51, 63, 75, 108, 222
drōṇavāpa, l.m., 102, 137, 138, 139, 222, 223
Dūbi plates of Bhāskaravarman, 58
Duḍḍā, *Bud.* nun, 182
Duḍḍāmahāvihāra, 163, 164
Durā *ins.*, 13
Durgā, goddess, 219, 221, 222, 278
Durgarakshita, *m.*, 217
dūtaka, off., 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 48
Dvaitavana forest, 217
Dvaitavanārāma-Mahāvihāra, 164
Dvīpa (modern Diu), *reg.*, 89
dyūtādhyaksha, off., 66

E

Early Brāhmi, script, 257, 286
Eastern dialect of Aśokan inscriptions, 257, 260
Eastern variety of Gupta alphabet, 288
Edicts of Aśoka, 286
Edward Thomas, 284
Egypt, *co.*, 40, 177
Ēkaliṅgaji *ins.*, 215
Ēkashashṭhirātra, sac., 200, 268
Epics, *wk.*, 202

Epic-Puranic religion, 204
Epirus, *co.*, 40, 177
Ēraṇ, *tn.*, 96, 208
Ēraṇ coin *ins.*, 284
Ēraṇ stone pillar *ins.* of Bhānugupta, 96
Ēraṇ stone pillar *ins.* of Budhagupta, 15, 201, 206, 208, 210
Ēraṇ *ins.* of Samudragupta, 286
Ēraṇ stone boar *ins.* of Tōramāṇa, 206, 208, 211
Erraguḍi *MRE.*, 286
E. Ṣenart, 283
Euthydemous, Greek *k.*, 41

F

Fa-hien, *au.*, 74, 79, 98, 109, 180, 195
Faridpur *cp. ins.* of the time of Dharmāditya, 127, 137, 161
Figures of speech,
Anuprāsa, 267, 268, 269, 271, 272, 273, 275, 277, 278, 279, 280
Atiśayōkti, 275, 276, 277, 281
Bhrāntimat, 275, 276
Chhēkānuprāsa, 271
Lāṭānuprāsa, 271
Pratīpa, 277
Pūrṇōpamā 273
Rūpaka, 273, 275, 277, 279, 280
Samāsōkti, 271, 280
Samuchchaya, 278
Ślēsha, 278, 280
Udātta, 275
Ullēkha, 272, 277
Upamā, 267, 268, 271, 273, 275, 277, 278, 280
Utprēkshā, 266, 267, 271, 274, 275, 278, 280, 282
Virōdha, 277, 281
Viśēshālaṁkāra, 275
Viśēshōkti, 279, 281
Vyatirēka, 281
Yathāsāṁkhya, 281
First Magadhan empire, 67
Fleet J.F., 26, 105, 136, 138, 220, 222, 225, 231, 287
Foucher, 178, 179
Fourteen Rock Edicts, 256
Fourth Buddhist Council, 187
Fragmentary charters of Dharasēna IV, 188

G

Gabhastiśvara, *de.*, 168, 216
Gaḍhā *ins.* of the time of Rudrasēna, 108
Gaḍhwā stone *ins.* of Chandragupta II, 108
Gaḍhwā stone *ins.* of Kumāragupta, 108, 139, 208
Gaḍhwā *ins.* of 467-68 A.D., 208, 211
Gadval plates, 56
gadya-kāvya, 267
Gājāyana, epi., 199
gajasādhanādhikṛita, off., 56
gaṁḍaka, coin, 110
gaṁdhika, perfumer, 141
gana, Jaina sect, 191, 193, 195

gaṇāchārya, Bud. tea., 156
gaṇaka, accountant, 14
gaṇanā, arithmetics or finance, 153, 162
gandha, applying of sandal paste, 188, 196, 224, 233, 235
Gandhāra, *reg.*, 43, 180, 212, 213, 228, 290
Gandharvas, semi-divine beings, 153, 223
Gaṅgā, *ri.*, 214
Gaṅgādhara, *m.*, 86
Gaṅgdhār stone *ins.* of Viśvavarman, 208, 219, 272
gaṇikā, courtesan, 5, 97
gaṇikādhyaksha, off., 5, 94
gaṇin, Jaina *tea.*, 157, 159
Ganjam, *di.*, 1
gañjavara s.a. Persian *ganjwar, off.*, 10, 86
garbhitatā, intrusion of one sentence into another, 269
Garde M.B., 187
Gargarākaṭa, *vi.*, 275
Gargatrirātra, sac., 201
Gargi-putra, *epi.*, 93
Garuḍa, de., 204, 206, 210, 227
garutmadanka, Garuḍa seal, 206
Garuḍa column of Heliodorus, 203, 204
Garuḍadhavaja, Garuḍa-pillar, 204, 230
Garuḍakētu, epi. of Vishṇu, 208, 210, 212
Gārulakas, *feud.*, 52, 74
Gaśūra Shāphara, *m.*, 226
Gauḍa, family, 182
Gauḍa, kingdom, 58
Gauḍas, *peo.*, 57, 58
Gauḍī, Sanskrit poetic style, 270, 271, 279, 280
Gaupti-putra, epi., 93
Gauri, *k.*, 107, 111
Gaurī, Pārvatī, 277
Gautama Buddha, 183
Gautamīputra, *m.*, 204
Gautamīputra, Śātavāhana *k.*, 43, 91
Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi, Śātavāhana, *k.*, 124
Gautamīputra Vrishadhvaja, *k.*, 226
Gavidhumat, *vi.*, 89, 167, 168
Gavimaṭh *MRE.* of Aśoka, 2
gavya, cow's milk, 234
Gayā, *cp. ins.* of Samudragupta, 124, 131
ghaṭa (ghaṭaka), measure of capacity, 137
Ghosh A., 189
ghōsha, cattle-pound, 99
Ghoshal U.N., 24, 71
Ghoshit-ārāma, *n.* of a monastery, 189, 190
Ghoshitārāma-Mahāvihāra, *n.* of a monastery, 164
Ghugrāhāti *cp. ins.* of Samāchāradēva, 112
Gillaka, *off.*, 55
Giligitta (Gilgit), *tn.*, 112
Girnār, *tn.*, 1, 2
Girnār *ins.* of Rudradāman, 91
Girnār Rock Edicts, 259, 285, 286
gita, vocal music, 104, 105, 153, 234
Gode P.K., 100
Gōlakyānti, *m.*, 197
Gold and copper coins of Kanishka, 179

Goldana, *m.*, 110
Gōmandilika, officer in charge of cattle, 14
Gōmatikoṭṭaka, *l.*, 50
Gōmindra, *m.*, 229
Gondophernes, Indo-Greek *k.*, 8, 213
Gōpa, *n.* of mountain, 224
Gōpāla-Krishṇa, 210
Gōpālpur brick inscriptions, 189
Gōparāja, *ch.*, 96
Gōpasvāmin, *off.*, 48
Gōptṛi, viceroy, 7, 15
Gorakhpur, *dist.*, 196
Gōśarman, Jaina *tea.*, 157, 197
gōshṭhi, committee, 97, 167, 234
Goswami K.G., 94
gōtra, 230
Gōvardhana, *l.*, 68, 102, 107, 135, 142
Gōvinda, *n.* of Vishṇu, 212
Gōvindagupta, Gupta *k.*, 94, 272
Gōvindapūr *ins.* of the Śaka year 1059, 86
Gōvinda-svāmin, *n.* of Vishṇu, 207, 212
Gōvindnagar *ins.* of Huvishka's reign, 187
Goyal S.R., 183, 218
grāma, vi. as a *t.d.*, 25, 26, 29
grāmakūṭa, off., 22, 26, 27
grāmika, off., 13, 21
Grāma-ratna, epi., 196
grāma-stūpa, 189
Grant of Dharasēna II, 22, 24, 27, 129, 130
Grant of Dharasēna IV, 109
Grant of Dhruvasēna I, 75
Grant of Dhruvasēna III, 28
Grant of Dyutivarman, 56
Grant of Guhasēna, 24
Grant of Guhila Bābhaṭa, 140
Grant of Guhila Bhāvihita, 76
Grants of Harsha, 112
Grant of Kharagraha II, 25
Grant of Śīlāditya III, 22
Grant of Śīlāditya VII, 24
Greek, *lang.*, 256
Greek, script, 256
Greeks, *peo.*, 283
Greeks, *dy.*, 94
Greek alphabet, 283
Greek rulers, 177
Greek writers, 122
griha-stūpa, 189
griha-vāstu, homestead, 127
Gṛihyasūtras, wk., 110, 200
gūḍhapurusha, off., 6
Guhanandin, Jaina *tea.*, 157
Guhasēna, Maitraka *k.*, 22, 52, 54, 55, 75, 154, 162, 182, 280, 281
Guhilas, *dy.*, 276
Gujarat, *reg.*, 14, 52
Gujarat, state, 192
Gujarrā *MRE.*, 286
Gulmagandhika, *vi.*, 222
Guṇaighar *ins.* of Vainyagupta, 19, 48, 49, 50
Guṇaighar plate, 138
Gundā *ins.* of Chashṭana, 9

Gundā *ins.* of Rudrasiṁha, 10, 42
guṇibhūtavyangya, implication of secondary type, 269
Gunji Rock *ins.* of Kumāravaradatta, 10, 42
Guptas, *dy.*, 11, 22, 23, 27, 29, 40, 44, 45, 46, 48, 50, 53, 54, 57, 74, 85, 87, 93, 94, 108, 131, 154, 180, 181, 182, 202, 206, 255, 256, 268, 274
Gupta alphabet, 287, 289
Gupta Brāhmi *s.a.* Late Brāhmi, 257
Gupta coins, 51
Gupta inscriptions, 53
Gurjaras, *feud. dy.*, 226
Gurjara-Pratihāra, *dy.*, 52
guru, *tea.*, 168, 215
gurvāyatana, teacher's shrine, 214, 215, 218
Gwalior, *tn.*, 224
Gwalior stone *ins.* of the time of Mihirakula, 224

H

Haimavata, *Bud.* sect, 184, 185
hala, *l.m.*, 138
Halder R.R., 132, 134
halikā-kara, tax, 74, 131, 132
Hana, *f.*, 93
Hara, Śiva, 220
Haragaṇa, *off.*, 22, 54
Haragaon sealings, 132
Harāhā *ins.* of Iśānavarman, 57, 58, 103, 154, 215, 275
haraṇi, *t.d.*, 25
Hari, Vishṇu, 236, 277
Hariḍāsa, *r.*, 93
Haridatta, *m.*, 278
Harigupta, *Bud.* monk, 181
Harinātha, *m.*, 216
Harisēna, *au.*, 196
Harishēṇa, *min.*, 15, 16, 18, 47, 101, 196, 206, 214, 268, 269, 270
Harisvāminī, *Bud.* nun, 180
hāritakalāpaka, green vegetables, 98
Haritamālagaḍhī-śākha, Jaina sect, 193
Harivaṁśa, *wk.*, 210, 229
Harivarman, *m.*, 167, 277
Hariyānaka, *vi.*, 26
Harsha, Pushpabhūti *k.*, 27, 28, 29, 30, 49, 52, 55, 56, 57, 72, 76, 78, 79, 91, 93, 98, 109, 131, 133, 143, 183, 197, 210, 218, 225, 236, 267, 279
Harshacharita, *wk.*, 27, 40, 71, 233
Harshadēva, Pāṇḍuvaṁśi *r.*, 217
Haryana region, 208
hasta, linear measure, 136, 137
Hastadatta, *m.*, 229
Hastadēva, *m.*, 166
Hastavapr-āhāra, *n.* of *t.d.*, 25
Hastavapr-āharaṇi *n.* of a *t.d.*, 26
Hastin, *m.*, 200
Hastin, Parivrājaka *k.*, 95
hastyadhyaksha, *off.*, 14
hasty-ārōha, *off.*, 55
hastyaśvajanavyāprita, *off.*, 48, 49
hāthārōha, elephant driver, 14, 54

Hāthi-Bāḍā *ins.* at Nagarī, 92, 199, 204, 264
Hāthigumphā *ins.* of Khāravela, 10, 41, 66, 67, 87, 104, 106, 153, 190, 191, 193, 235, 263, 286
Hathisimha, *r.*, ? 93
hathivaka, Superintendent of elephants, 14
Hātūn Rock *ins.* of Paṭōladēva, 112, 129
Hayuarā (?) *m.*, 93
Heliodorus, Greek ambassador, 203
Hidda *ins.*, 13
Himadata, *m.*, 111
Himalayan region, 185
Hīnayāna, *Bud.* school, 180, 187
Hīnayāna Sammatiya school, 182
Hinduism, 199
Hindus, *peo.*, 43, 93
Hipe Dhia, *m.*, 95, 106
Hiralal, 162
hiraṇya, tax, 131, 132
Hiuen Tsang, *au.*, 27, 52, 54, 56, 57, 78, 79, 90, 91, 98, 100, 109, 136, 164, 165, 182, 186, 198, 218, 225, 236
Homba, *l.*, 55
hōrakās, ladies, 93
Hultzsch E., 6, 26, 65, 85, 136, 257
Hummiyaka, *m.*, 12
Hūṇa, *tr.*, 45
Hūnas, *dy.*, 275
Hunter G.R., 285
Huvishka, Kushāṇa *k.*, 11, 12, 44, 94, 108, 179, 213, 226, 236
Hūvishka's Vihāra, 179
Hydaspes, *ri.*, 291

I

ibhya = *Kshatriya*, caste, 85
Ichchhāwar *Bud.* statutte *ins.*, 93
Idamoraka, *tea.*, 158
Ikshvāku, *dy.*, 91
India, *co.*, 42, 177
Indian Napolean, *epi.*, 44
Indo-Greeks, *peo.*, 42
Indo-Greeks, *dy.*, 8, 11, 85, 255, 257
Indo-Greek coins, 8
Indōr *cp. ins.* of Skandagupta, 15, 72, 87, 88, 89, 135, 137, 143, 160, 223, 288
Indra, one of the *dikpālas*, 206, 210
Indradēva, *min.*, 42
Indrānuja, *epi.*, of Vāmana 211, 212
Indrapura (*mod.* Indōr), *tn.*, 143, 223
Indravishṇu, *m.*, 201
Indus, *ri.*, 290
Indus civilization, 212
Indus script, 284
Indus valley seals, 285
Inscribed Bōdhisattva image from Mathurā, 94
ins. from Sāñchi *stūpa* I, 10, 41, 68, 103, 188
ins. from Sāñchi *stūpas*, 188
ins. from Udayagiri-Khaṇḍagiri caves, 66
ins. of Guhila Śīlāditya, 231
ins. of *Mahārāja* Śarvanātha, 48
Intwa clay sealing, 164
Iraninan Magas, 223
Isadata, *m.*, 111

Isāpur *yūpa ins.*, 11
Isāpur *yūpa ins.* of the time of Vāsishka, 86, 200, 264
Isāpur *yūpa ins.* of year 24, 11
Iśānavarman, Maukhari *k.*, 52, 57, 88, 154, 215
Iśānēśvara, Śiva, 217
Iśvara, Śiva, 218
Iśvaragupta, *off.*, 29
Itawa, *di.*, 89
ithijhakamahāmātra or *stryadhyakshamhāmātra, off.*, 5, 94
Itivuttaka, wk., 176

J

Jabalpur plates of Hastin, 99, 165
Jagadishpur plate of Gupta year 128, 222
Jagatpur brick *ins.* of Śīlavarman, 201, 265
Jaina canon, 198
Jaina Councils, 198
Jaina *ins.* from Mathurā, 97
Jaina *stūpa*, 195
Jainsim, *rel.* sect, 87, 93, 97, 111, 155, 158, 159, 174, 179, 190, 191, 192, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 203, 212, 229, 236, 265
Jalālābād, *tn.*, 1
Jalandhar, *tn.*, 218
Jāmb plates of Pravarsēna II, 207
Jambuvānara, *vi.*, 25
James Prinsep, 283
jānapada, Realm-corporation, 10, 67
Janārdana, Vishṇu, 208, 212, 231
jarā-maraṇa, old age and death, 192
Jātaka, Bud. wk., 3
Jaugada Rock Edict of Aśoka, 1
Jaunpur *ins.* of Ādityavarman, 57
Jayabhaṭa, *k.*, 279
Jayabhaṭṭā, *f.*, 181
Jayadatta, *off.*, 18
Jayadēva, *m.*, 13
Jayanāga, *m.*, 13
jayanapati, off., 48
Jayarāja, Śarabhapurīya *k.*, 207
jayaskandhāvāra, royal camp, 55
Jayasōma, Mālava *r.*, 200
Jayaswal K.P., 42, 66, 67, 70, 110, 191, 263
Jēntaka, *m.*, 134
Jesar Plates of Śīlāditya III, 23, 111, 125, 130
Jihunia or Zeionises, *k.*, 42
Jihunika, Kshatrapa *r.*, 8
jina, tirthankara, 193, 194, 195
jīva, soul, 191
Jīvaka, *Bud.* monk, 179
Jīvanta, *m.*, 143
Jōgimārā cave *ins.*, 97
Jubbalpore, *di.*, 2
Junāgaḍh *ins.* of the grandson of Jayadāman, 192
Junāgaḍh *ins.* of Rudradāman, 2, 8, 9, 43, 67, 86, 92, 104, 106, 107, 123, 128, 130, 131, 136, 153, 264, 267
Junāgaḍh *ins.* of Skandagupta, 15, 45, 74, 88, 107, 129, 136, 208, 211, 227

Junnar cave *ins.* of the time of Nahapāna, 107
Jyēshṭānaka, *vi.*, 111
jyōtisha, Vedic astronomy, 160

K

Kadamba, family, 92
Kadambapadraka, *vi.*, 112
Kadphises group, 11
Kadphises I, Kushāṇa, *k.*, 44
Kahāum, *vi.*, 196
Kahāum *ins.* of Skandagupta, 196
Kailan *cp. ins.* of Śridharāṇarāta, 138, 163, 183, 236
Kairā plates of Dadda II (629 A.D.), 226
Kairā plates of Dadda II (634 A.D.), 226
Kaisara, tit., 11
Kajaṅgala, *l.*, 57
Kākanādabōṭa (Sāñchi), *vi.*, 164, 180
Kakka, *m.*, 273
Kakubha (Kahāum), *vi.*, 196
Kākusthavarman, Kadamba *k.*, 92
Kalāchchalā grant of Iśvararāta, 48, 49, 73
Kalāpaka-pathaka, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 25
Kalaśēśvara, *de.*, 168
kālavāḍa, s.a. kalavāḷa or *kālavāḷa, off.*, 10, 13, 100
kālavāḍini, wife of *kālavāḍa*, 13
Kāldarra *ins.* of year 113, 178
Kale M.R., 70
Kālidāsa, *au.*, 7, 41, 72, 98, 199, 211, 268, 271, 274, 275, 280, 282, 283
Kalinga, *co.*, 10, 39, 40, 42, 190
Kalinga alphabet, 286, 287
Kalinga Edicts, 258
Kalinga-jina, image of, 191
Kalpas, wk., 157
Kalpaka, *min.*, 190
Kalpanāmaṇditikā, wk., 266
Kālsi *RE.* of Aśoka, 1
Kalwān *ins.* of year 13, 185
Kalwān *cp. ins.* of the 1st c. A.D., 189
Kambhōja, *co.*, 56
Kambhojas, *peo.*, 2
Kamalapaksha, *m.*, 111
Kāmarūpa, kingdom, 57
kammāra, blacksmith, 140
Kānākherā *ins.* of Śridharavarman, 10, 43
Kanās, *vi.*, 230
Kanās plate of Bhānudatta, 166, 230
Kanās plate of Lōkavigraha-bhaṭṭāraka, 159, 166, 230
Kanauj, kingdom, 58
Kanauj, *tn.*, 19, 55
Kane P.V., 66, 68, 78
Kāngrā, *reg.*, 290
Kanishka (I), Kushāṇa *k.*, 11, 12, 43, 178, 179, 187, 213, 236
Kanishka II, Kushāṇa *k.*, 11, 12
Kanishka stūpa, 178
Kanishka's vihāra, 164, 179
Kaniyasika-kula, Jaina sect, 192
kaṇṭakōddharaṇa, off., 16
Kāṇvas, *dy.*, 85, 177, 202

Kānyakubja, *co.*, 218
Kāpadvaṇaj grant of Dhruvasēna III, 24
Kapālēśvara, Śiva, 217
Kapila, Pāśupata *tea.*, 214, 215
Kapilēśvara, *n.* given to a Śivaliṅga, 214, 215
Kapitthika, *l.*, 56
kara, tax, 123, 130, 131, 132
Kara Buddhist *ins.*, 188
Karajika, *vi.*, 124
Karamdāṁḍā or Karamḍāṇḍā *ins.* of Kumāragupta, 44, 87, 215, 219
karaṇa, person of a mixed caste, 89
Karaṁja, *n.* of a tree, 142
Karkka, *m.*, 125
Kārlē, *vi.*, 142
karmasachiva, *off.*, 9
Karṇasuvarṇa, *l.*, 57
Karnataka, state, 2, 260, 290
Karpaṭika, *m.*, 125
kārshāpaṇa, coin, 68, 101, 123, 138, 139, 142
Kārttika, lunar month, 217
Kārttikēya, *de.*, 166, 219, 226, 227, 278
Kāru, Vedic gotra, 91
kārus, artisans, 89
Kāruvāki, Mauryan *q.*, 91, 92, 93, 106, 108
Kaśa-dēśa, *co.*, 95
kāsākāra, brazier, 140, 142
Kashmir, *reg.*, 27
Kāśi, *tn.*, 196
Kasiā, *cp. ins.*, 189
Kāśiputra Bhāgabhadra, *k.*, 203
Kāśyapiya, *Bud.* sect, 186
Kāthiawār, *reg.*, 1, 52
kaṭuka, *off.*, 56
Kātyāyana, *au.*, 71
Kātyāyanī, Pārvatī, 220, 221
Kaumārī, one of the *saptamātṛikas*, 219
Kauṇḍiṇyapura-vishaya, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 25
Kauśāmbī, *tn.*, 2, 189, 227
Kauśāmbī *PE.* of Ashoka, 175, 184
Kauśāmbī style of middle Brāhmī, 287
Kauṭalya Arthaśāstra, *wk.*, 110
Kauṭilya, *au.*, 14, 39, 51, 53, 58, 65, 66, 85, 90, 96, 100, 104, 123, 136, 143, 152, 153
kauṭubika (*kauḍavika*), grain and linear measure, 137
kavi, poet, 270
Kavirāja, *epi.*, 154
kavisamaya, poetic convention, 279
kāvya, poetry, 267, 270, 282
kāvyadōsha, poetical imperfection, 269
kāya-nishīdī, relic memorial, 191
kāyastha, a clerk, 71
Keralaputras, *peo.*, 2
Kēśava, *m.*, 217
kevali-jnāña, perfect knowledge, 192
Khādāṭapāra, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 19
khādyakūṭapākika, *off.*, 24, 101
Khajjūrī-vāpī, *n.* of a well, 130
Kharagraha, Maitraka *k.*, 23, 52, 154
Kharagraha II, Maitraka *k.*, 52, 55, 89
Kharapallāna, Kshatrapa *r.*, 12

Kharapallāna, *m.*, 12
Kharasalerapati, *m.*, 86
Khāravela, *k.*, 7, 42, 50, 67, 87, 93, 104, 153, 162, 191, 192, 235, 236
khārī, *m.* of capacity, 137
khārīvāpa, *l.m.*, 137
Kharōshṭhī, *n.* of a script, 161, 162, 213, 256, 257, 283, 290, 291
Khātanā, *m.*, 227
Khaṭāpurāṇa, *vi.*, 19
Khēṭaka, *vi.*, 55
Khēṭak-āhāra, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 52
Khibira Ṛishi,, *n.* of a lake, 106
khila (*khila-kshētra*), waste land, 126
Khōh, *vi.*, 208
Khōh *cp. ins.* of *Mahārāja* Hastin, 165
Khōh *cp. ins.* of *Mahārāja* Saṁkshōbha, 161, 221
Khōh *cp. ins.* of *Mahārāja* Śarvanātha, 209, 224
Khōh *cp.* charters of Uchchakalpa rulers, 221
Khōh *cp. ins.* of *Mahārāja* Jayanātha, 165, 208
Khotan, *co.*, 261
Khotan *MS.*, 291
khōvā s.a. aṭṭapatibhōga, share of the lord of market, 144
Khuddaka-nikāya, *wk.*, 159
Kielhorn F., 2, 67, 271, 282
Kikkaka, *m.*, 125
Kinnaras, semi-divine beings, 223
Kirārī Brāhmī *ins.* 66
Kōkāmukhasvāmin, Vishṇu, 209, 211
kōlikanikāya, guild of weavers, 135
Koṇāchika, *vi.*, 142
Kōṇādēvī, *q.*, 107
Kōnākamana (Kanaka-muni), 175
Konow Sten, 178, 186, 189, 213, 261, 262
Kōsala, *reg.*, 7
Kōsalādhipa Dhanadēva, Śuṅga, *k.*, 7
Kōsam *ins.* of Bhadramagha's reign, 134, 143
Kōsam *ins.* of *Mahārāja* Bhūmavarman, 216, 220
Kōsam *ins.* of the reign of Kanishka, 94, 189
Kōsam *ins.* of the reign of *Mahārāja* Vaiśravaṇa, 181
koṭhāgāla (*kōshṭh-āgāra*), store-house, 110
Kōṭivarsha, *tn.*, 18, 71, 112
Kōṭivarsha, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 15, 21
Kōṭṭammahikādēvī, goddess, 222
Koṭṭiya-gaṇa, Jaina sect, 192, 193, 195
Kṛipura, *tn.*, 49
Kṛishṇa, incarnation of Vishṇu, 111, 207, 209, 210, 229
kṛishṇa-tala, black soil, 127
Kṛitānta-pārasu, *tit.*, 45
Kshaharāta, tit., 178
Kshatrapa, *tit.*, 8, 9, 12, 99, 178
Kshatrapa, *dy.*, 42, 68, 85, 86, 123, 155
Kshatrapas of Mathurā and W. India, family, 8, 9
Kshatrapa *ins.* at Mōrā, 94
Kshatrapa rulres, 192, 194
Kshatriya, caste, 84, 85, 86, 90, 92
Kshatriya, *comm.*, 100, 223

Kshēmāryā, Durgā or Pārvatī, 97, 167, 221, 234
Kshēmēśvara, *n.* given to Śiva, 215
Kubēra, one of the *dikpālas*, 206, 281
Kubēranāgā, Gupta *q.*, 92, 93
Kubja, composer, 282
Kudārkoṭ *ins.* 89, 167, 277
Kujula-kadphises, 187
kula, Jaina sect, 192, 193
kula, popular court, 68
kulapati Bhāgudalana, *tea.*, 167, 209
kularika, potter, 140, 142
Kulavriddhi, *off.*, 19
kulika, artisan, 72
kulya, measure of capacity, 137
kulyavāpa, *l.m.*, 127, 137, 138, 139
Kumāra, Kārttikeya, 226, 227
Kumāra, *tit.*, 9
Kumāradēvī, Gupta *q.*, 92
Kumāragupta, Gupta *k.*, 15, 20, 44, 45, 53, 74, 88, 103, 164, 165, 208, 219, 222, 227, 231
Kumāralāta, *au.*, 266
kumāra-mahāmātra, joint ruler of a province under Mauryan administration, 4, 6
kumārāmātya, *off.*, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 27, 28, 47, 48
kumārāmāty-ādhikaraṇa, *off.*, 20
Kumāraśānti, *m.*, 275
Kumāra-sthāna, temple of Kārttikēya, 226
Kumārasvāmin, *n.* given to Vishṇu, 208, 231
Kumārī-hill, 191
Kumrahāra (*i.e.*, Pāṭaliputra), *tn.*, 108
Kuṇḍadhāni-vishaya, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 29
Kuntala, *off.*, 56
Kura *cp. ins.* of Tōramāṇa Shāha, 155, 186, 289
Kura *ins.* of the time of Tōramāṇa Shāhi Javūvla, 155, 164, 181, 186, 289
Kurudhamma-jātaka, *Bud. wk.*, 3
Kurud plates of Narēndra, 163
Kurram casket *ins.*, 184, 189
Kuśahṛida, *vi.*, 166
Kushāṇas, *peo.*, 8
Kushāṇa family, 12
Kushāṇa *dy.*, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 43, 44, 46, 50, 54, 68, 85, 94, 123, 124, 142, 155, 178, 194, 255, 257
Kushāṇa alphabet, 287
Kushāṇa Brāhmī, *s.a.* Middle Brāhmī, 257, 286, 287
Kushāṇa coins, 44, 219
Kushāṇaputra Shāhi, *tit.*, 11
Kushāṇa State, 43
Kuśika, *tea.*, 214, 215
Kuṭila, *s.a.* Siddhamātrikā script, 257
kuṭumbin, cultivator, 89, 125

L

Label *ins.* from Udayagiri and Khaṇḍagiri caves, 10
Laghujīyaka, *m.*, 125
Lāghulovāda, *wk.*, 159
Lāla, *m.*, 12
Lālaka, *k.*, 93

Lākhāmaṇḍal *praśasti*, 289
Lakkhaṇa-sutta, *wk.*, 176
Lakshmī, *de.*, 182, 211, 212, 219, 221, 222, 277, 278
Lakulīśa, incarnation of Śiva, 214, 215
lakuṭa or *laguḍa*, staff, 215
Langdon, 284
Laṅkā *co.*, 181
Lāṭa, *reg.*, 54, 55, 111, 224, 270
Lāṭa-pahalihasvāmin, *m.*, 111
Lāṭa-vishaya, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 53
Late Brāhmī, script, 257
Lauriyā Ararāj *P.E.* of Aśoka, 2
lavaṇa, salt, 98, 99, 134
Lavaṇaśōbhikā, *f.*, 97
Law B.C., 95
lēhahāraka (*lēkhahāraka*), letter carrier, 14
lēkha, correspondence, 153
lēkhaka, writer, 161
Liaka, *m.*, 12
Liaka Kusulaka, Kshatrapa *r.*, 8, 178
Liṅga, phallic representatoin of Śiva, 218
lipikara, writer, 161
Lodhiā plates of Śivagupta Bālārjuna, 217
lōhakāra, blacksmith, 140
lōhavaṇiya, ironmonger, 134
lōhikāraka or *lōhikakāruka*, worker in metals, 140
Lōkāditya, *m.*, 90
Lōkanātha, *k.*, 89, 92
lōkapālas, guardians of quarters, 15, 206
lōkavārtā, popular usage and custom, 162
Lōkōttaravādin, *Bud. Sect.*, 187
Loralai, *vi.*, 261
Lord of Rāmagiri, 211
Lucknow Museum brick *ins.*, 199
Lucknow Museum *ins.* of Scythian period, 102
Lüders H., 10, 13, 66, 141, 156, 195, 205, 219, 226, 228, 266
Lumbinī *vi.*, 2, 123, 130, 131, 175
Lunsaḍī plates of Śīlāditya II, 89, 130

M

Macedonia, *co.*, 40, 177
Mādhava, *m.*, 54, 212
Madhuban grant of Harsha, 27, 29, 56, 89, 218, 225
madhuparka, a mixture of honey, 234
Madhusūdana, *n.* of Vishṇu, 212
Madhyamikā (Nagarī), *tn.*, 41
Madhya Pradesh, state, 2, 160, 197, 208, 273
Madra, *m.*, 196
Magadha, *co.*, 40, 190, 198, 209
Māgadhī, dialect, 260, 263
Māgadhī Prākrit, dialect, 258, 260
Magas, *comm.*, 223
Magha, *fa.*, 287
Māgha, lunar month, 218
mahābalādhikṛita, *off.*, 46, 47, 48, 97
Mahābhārata, *wk.*, 160, 161, 163, 214
Mahābhāshya, *wk.*, 41, 199
mahāchauröddharaṇika, *off.*, 46

Mahādānapati, *tit.*, 8
mahādaṇḍanāyaka, *off.*, 10, 12, 15, 18, 42, 44, 46, 47, 48, 55, 69, 76
mahādaṇḍapāśika, *off.*, 46
Mahādēva, Śiva, 213
Mahādēva-pādānudyāta, *tit.*, 216
Mahādēvī, *tit.*, 93, 94, 167
Mahādēvī Śrīmatī, *q.*, 167
Mahājana, *comm.*, 134
Mahākāvya, epic, 270
mahākshapaṭalādhikaraṇādhikṛita, *off.*, 27, 29
mahākshapaṭalika, *off.*, 22, 24, 28, 29
Mahākshatrapa, *tit.*, 8, 9, 12, 43, 93, 94, 108, 155, 178, 205, 266
Mahākshatrapa Rājuvula, 178
Mahāmeghavāhana, *ep.*, 41
mahāmātra, *off.*, 4, 64, 109, 110
Mahāmaṅgala-sutta, *wk.*, 176
mahānasika, kitchen *off.*, 14, 101
Mahā-Nannarāja, Pāṇḍava *k.*, 206
mahāpīlūpati, *off.*, 46, 47, 48
mahāpramātāra, *off.*, 27, 28, 29, 78
mahāpratihāra, *off.*, 16, 17, 23, 24, 46, 79, 230
Mahārāja, *tit.*, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 18, 21, 22, 27, 29, 45, 48, 51, 73, 79, 88, 94, 95, 99, 107, 127, 131, 159, 161, 179, 181, 182, 195, 197, 200, 202, 204, 206, 207, 208, 209, 217, 224, 226, 227, 230, 231, 273
Mahārājādhirāja, *tit.*, 51, 94, 182
Mahārāja Bhāgavata, Śuṅga, *k.*, 204
Mahārāja Chandravarman, *k.*, 207
Mahārāja Harivarman, Maukhari *k.*, 182
Mahārāja Jayanātha, Uchchakalpa *k.*, 208, 209
Mahārāja Mātṛivishṇu, *k.*, 201, 206, 208
Mahārāja Rudrasēna, Vākāṭaka *k.*, 207
Mahārāja-Rudrasēna-Vihāra, 164
Mahārājādhirāja Śarvavarman, Maukhari *k.*, 182
Maharashtra, state, 1, 27
Mahāsāmanta, *tit.*, 29, 46, 89, 217, 224, 230
Mahāsāmanta Mahārāja tit., 21
Mahāsāmanta Pradoshaśarman, 209
mahāsāndhivigrahādhikṛita, *off.*, 54, 56
Mahāsāṅghika, *Bud.* school, 183, 184, 186
Mahāsēna, Kārttikēya, 226
mahāsēnāni, *off.*, 14
Mahāsēna Gupta, *k.*, ? 57
mahāsēnāpati, *tit.*, 45, 47
Mahā-Śivaguptarāja, Pāṇḍuvaṁśi, *k.*, 236
Mahāsthān plaque *ins.*, 1, 109, 190
Mahāsthāna, great sanctuary, 205
mahśāvapati, *off.*, 16, 46, 48
mahātalavarī, wife of a *mahātalavara*, 16
mahattara, *off.*, 13, 21, 22, 23, 27
Mahāvīra, 24th *tīrthaṅkara*, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 257
Mahāviyūha-sutta, *wk.*, 176
Mahāyāna, *Bud.* school, 187
Mahēndrakalpa, *tit.*, 45
Mahēśvara, *de.*, 214, 215, 218
Māhēśvara, Pāśupata, sect, 214
Māhēśvarī, *mātṛikā*, 219
Mahichchaka, *vi.*, 166

Mahiśāsaka, *Bud.* school, 181, 186
Mahishāsuramardinī, *de.*, 220
Maitraka, *dy.*, 21, 22, 28, 29, 51, 52, 53, 54, 72, 74, 76, 89, 90, 131, 133, 143, 154, 160, 182, 197, 216, 276
Maitras, *peo.*, 96
Maitrāyaṇīya branch of Yajurvēda, 166, 167
Maitraka grants, 160, 165
Maitraka grant of 527 A.D., 111
Maitraka record of 571 A.D., 112
Maity S.K., 124
Majhamā-śākhā, Jaina sect, 192
Majhgawām *cp. ins.* of *Mahārāja* Hastin, 48, 165
Majjhimanikāya, *wk.*, 156, 159
Majumdar B.K., 41, 42, 45
Majumdar N.G., 8, 128
Majumdar R.C., 51, 68, 69, 79, 183
Maka, *m.*, 226
Mālāda, *m.*, 99
Mālava, clan, 200, 202, 227
Mālava, *co.*, 14, 52, 55, 92, 218
Mālava, kingdom, 55
Mālavaka, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 25
Mālavikāgnimitram, *wk.*, 7, 41, 72, 199
Māliyā *cp.* grant of Dharasēna II, 103, 154
Mallār plates of Śivagupta Bālārjuna, 217, 236
Mallasārul plates of Vijayasēna, 102, 128, 136
Malla-taḍāga, *n.* of a tank, 130
mālya, offering of flowrs, 224, 233
Mammaka, *off.*, 23
Mānapura, *tn.*, 231
Māna rulers of Magadha, 87
Mañchapurī cave *ins.*, 10, 93
Mañchapurī *ins.* of Khāravela's queen, 191
maṇḍala, *t.d.*, 19
Maṇḍalēśvara *n.* given to Śiva, 217
Maṇḍali *n.* of a *t.d.*, 26
Maṇḍali-draṅga, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 23
maṇḍapa, a hall, 107
Mandār Hill, *l.*, 211, 231
Mandār Hill Narasimha Cave *ins.*, 209
Mandār Hill Rock *ins.* of Ādityasēna, 209
Mandasōr, *tn.*, 112, 271, 273
Mandasōr *ins.* of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman, 51, 87, 96, 100, 102, 103, 104, 135, 143, 160, 223, 270
Mandasōr *ins.* of Naravarman, 88, 207, 210
Mandasōr *ins.* of Prabhākara, 181, 187
Mandasōr *ins.* of Yaśōdharman, 92, 216, 274
Madasōr *ins.* of Yaśōdharman and Vishṇuvardhana, 105, 160, 162, 276
Mandasōr *ins.* of 467-68 A.D., 107, 271
mandira, temple, 194
manikara or *mānikara*, jeweller, 141, 149
Māṇikiāla *ins.*, 12, 13
Maṇi-Nāga, *de.*, 229
Maṇināga, *m.*, 230
Maṇināgabhaṭṭāraka, *de.*, 166, 167
Maṇināga-Durgā, goddess, 230
Maṇināgēśvara, *de.*, 230
Maṇināgēśvara-Bhaṭṭāraka, *de.*, 230
Maṇināga hill at Raṇpur, 230

Maṇināgamaṭha, 230
Maniyār maṭha, *l.*, 229
Mankuwār stone image *ins.* of the time of Kumāragupta I, 180
Manōrama, *m.*, 140
mansabdar, off., 16, 28
Mānsehrā, *vi.*, 1, 290
Mānsehrā Rock Edicts, 256, 257, 261
mantri, min., 17, 48
mantri-kumārāmatya, min., 88
mantri-parishad, council of ministers, 17
Manu, *au.*, 83, 63, 156
Manusmṛiti, wk., 157
Manushyaprakṛiti dēvas, pañchavīras, 205
Māṇvāyaṇi, *fa.*, 88
Mārkaṇḍēya-Purāṇa, wk., 221
Markaṭasāgara, *vi.*, 29, 112
Maski *MRE.* of Aśoka, 2
masopavasini (Skt. māsōpavāsinī), a lady who fasted for a month, 195
Māt *ins.* of the time of Huvishka, 12
maṭha, centre of Vedic learning, 165, 167, 209
maṭha, temple, 166
Mathurā region, 205, 219
Mathurā, *tn.*, 11, 41, 97, 106, 164, 180, 185, 190, 192, 193, 195, 196, 197, 204, 205, 228, 229, 287, 290
Mathurā Buddha image *ins.* of year 22, 101, 141
Mathurā *Bud. ins.* of year 47, 179
Mathurā Brāhmī *ins.* of year 28, 68, 98, 139, 142
Mathurā Brāhmī *ins.* of 106 A.D., 108
Mathurā Brāhmī *ins.* of the time of Huvishka, 86
Mathurā fragmentary *ins.* of the reign of Huvishka, 232
Mathurā image *ins.* of year 33 of Huvishka, 156
Mathurā image *ins.* of year 67, 179
Mathurā image *ins.* of Kumāragupta I, 141, 195
Mathurā image *ins.* of 549-50 A.D., 164, 181
Mathurā *ins.* of year 4, 12
Mathurā *ins.* of year 14, 101
Mathurā *ins.* of the time of Kanishka, year 23, 59
Mathurā *ins.* of year 77, 179
Mathurā *ins.* of year 92, 264
Mathurā *ins.* of Huvishka, year 28, 68
Mathurā *ins.* of the reign of Huvishka, 11, 12, 136, 232
Mathurā *ins.* of Śōḍāsa, 10, 86, 107
Mathurā *ins.* of the time of Vāsudēva, 12, 13
Mathurā *ins.* of Kumāragupta, 157
Mathurā *ins.* of the reign of Skandagutpa, 180
Mathurā *ins.* of Budhagupta, 236
Mathurā Jaina image *ins.*, 13, 94, 105, 140
Mathurā Lion Capital *ins.*, 89, 92, 93, 155, 178, 184, 185
Mathurā Museum Nāga figure *ins.*, 228
Mathurā Nāga image *ins.* of the reign of Huvishka, 229
Mathurā pedestal *ins.* of the time of Kanishka, 264

Mathurā pilaster *ins.* of Chandragupta II, 157, 214, 218
Mathurā stone bowl *ins.*, 102
Mathurā stone channel *ins.* of year 91, 184
Mathurā stone image *ins.* of 549-50 A.D., 164
Māthuraka, *m.*, 10
Matila, *pr.*, 44
matisachiva, min., 9
Mātṛi, divine mother, 219
Matṛichēṭa, *m.*, 95, 224
Mātṛidāsa, *m.*, 95
Mātṛila, *m.*, 125
Matṛiśarmārya, *m.*, 95
Mātṛiśarman, *m.*, 95
Mātṛiśiva, *m.*, 95
Mātṛitula, *m.*, 95
Mātṛivishṇu, *k.*, 201, 206, 208, 231
Mātṛivishṇu, *m.*, 95
Māṭusvāmin, *tea.*, 157
Maukharis, *dy.*, 52, 57, 88, 90, 93, 133, 143, 182, 200, 202
Maurya, *dy.*, 7, 9, 11, 14, 130, 177, 256
Mauryan empire, 1, 7
Mauryan India, 256
Maues, Śaka *r.*, 8
Mayūrāksha, *min.*, 208, 219
Max müller, 282
Medieval Jaina *ins.*, 9
Mediterranean sea, 283
Meerut, *di.*, 2
Megasthenes, *au.*, 39, 84, 92
Mēghadūta, wk., 211, 271
Mēghavāhana of Ceylon, *k.*, 180
Mehandale M.A., 262
Mehika-kula *s.a.* Mehiya-kula, Jaina sect, 193
Mehraulī, *vi.*, 230
Mehraulī pillar *ins.* of Chandragupta II, 50, 207, 230
Meanander, Indo-Greek *k.*, 8, 177, 178, 213
Meridarkha s.a. Meridarkhes, Greek *tit.*, 178
Mesha stone *ins.*, 284
Metres,
Anushṭubh, 270, 272, 273, 274, 278
Āryā, 270
Bhujaṅgavijrimbhita, 266, 270, 275
Drutavilambita, 270, 275
Hariṇi, 270
Mālini, 273
Pṛithvi, 272
Pushpitāgrā, 273
Śārdūlavikrīḍita, 270, 275, 276, 277, 278
Sragdharā, 274, 277
Upajāti, 272, 273
Upēndravajrā, 278
Vaṁśasthavila, 273
Vasantatilakā, 272, 273, 278
Viyōgini, 273, 274
mēya, tax, 131, 132
Middle Brāhmi, 257
Middle Indo-Aryan, *lang.*, 257
Middle kingdom, 98, 109
Mid-Indian dialect of Aśokan inscriptions, 257, 258, 260

Midnapore *cp. ins.* of the time of Śaśāṅka, 79, 89
Mihira, clan, 225
Mihira, sun-god, 225
Mihiralakshmi, *q.* mother, 217, 219, 225
Mihirēśvara, *n.* of Śiva, 217, 219, 224, 225
Milinda, *s.a.* Meanander, Indo-Greek *k.*, 177
Milinda-pañha, *wk.*, 177
Mimāmsā, a system of Indian Philosophy, 161
mithunyugala, Jaina symbol, 192
Minor Rock Edicts of Aśoka, 2, 260
Minor pillar *ins.* at Sāñchi, 64
Minor pillar *ins.* at Sāranāth, 64
Mirashi V.V., 211
Mitā, *f.*, 111
Mitākshara, *wk.*, 68
Mitra, Sun-god, 225
Mitramiśra, *au.*, 67
Mixed dialect, *lang.*, 255, 264
Moga, Śaka *r.*, 178
Mohenjo Daro, *tn.*, 261
Moika, *m.*, 213
Moneya-sute, *wk.*, 159
Monier Williams, 136, 138
Mookerji R.K., 2, 4, 163
Mōrā *ins.* of Kanishka, 13
Mōrā well *ins.*, 205, 266
Mōṭā Māchiālā plates of Dharasēna II, 22, 24
Mount Úrjyat, 208
MRE. I, 175
MRE. II, 155
Mrichchhakatika, *wk.*, 70, 71
Mudgala, *gōtra*, 93
Mukha-linga, 218
Mūla, *m.*, 110
Mūladēva, *min.*, 92
Multān, *tn.*, 290
Muṇḍēśvarī *ins.* of Udayasēna, 137, 167, 209, 217
muni, ascetic, 197
Muni-gāthā, *wk.*, 159
Muradvisha, Vishṇu, 209
Musānagar Brick *ins.*, 92, 199

N

Nadiguta (Nandigupta), *m.*, 111
Nāḍikā-kula, Jaina sect, 192
Nāga, family, 111
Nāga, *off.*, 23, 28
Nāga, serpent god, 219, 228, 229
Nāgā, *f.*, 111, 228
Nāgā, serpent goddess, 228
Nāgabhaṭa, Gurjara-Pratihāra, *k.*, 52
Nāgabhaṭa, *feud.*, 272
Nāgabhaṭṭa, *m.*, 229
Nāga cult, 227, 228, 229, 230
Nāgadatā, *f.*, 228
Nāgadatta, *m.*, 111, 229
Nagadatta, *pr.*, 44
Nāgadēvā, *f.*, 228
Nāgadēva, *m.*, 217, 228

Nāgapālitā, *f.*, 228
Nāgapiya, *m.*, 227
nagara akhadamsa, *off.*, 10, 66
Nāgarāja Chakavāka, 228
Nāgarāja Erapata, 228
Nāgarakhita, *m.*, 228
nagararakshin, *off.*, 14, 66
nagaraśrēshṭhin, head of all the artisan guilds of the district, 20, 71
nagaravyavahārika, *off.*, 5, 64, 65
Nagarī, *vi.*, 92, 204
Nāgarī script, 257, 290
Nagarī *ins.* of Dhanika, 101
Nagarī *ins.* of Sarvatāta, 205, 206, 256
Nagarī *ins.* of 424 A.D., 208
Nāgārjuna, *Bud.* scholar, 198
Nāgārjunakoṇḍa *ins.*, 16
Nāgārjuni Hill cave *ins.* of Anantavarman, 96, 155, 215, 220, 273
Nāgārjunikoṇḍa, *vi.*, 43
Nāgasēna, *Bud.* monk, 177
Nāgasimha, *off.*, 48
Nāgavana, 42
Nāga worship, 227, 229
Nāgēndra, *epi.* of Dadhikarṇa, 228
Nāgī, serpent goddess, 219
Nāgila, *m.*, 111, 227
Nāgiraṭṭa-maṇḍala, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 19
Nahapāna, Western Kshatrapa *k.*, 8, 9, 68, 99, 124, 139
Naigama, interpreter of Vedic quotations, 160
Naigamesha, Jaina *de.*, 193
naityik-ātithi, performer of *atithi-yajña* daily, 232
naivēdya, daily offerings to god, 166
nala or *nāla* or *naḍa*, measuring rod, 137
Nālandā, *tn.*, 164, 165, 182
Nālandā brick *ins.*, 181
Nālandā brick *ins.* of 516-17 A.D., 189
Nālandā *cp. ins.* of Samudragupta, 48, 49, 50, 87, 124, 131, 160, 165, 206
Nālandā *ins.* of Yaśōvarmadēva, 99, 102, 165
Nālandā monastery, 182
Nālandā *saṅghārāma*, 164
Nālandā seal of Harsha, 72
Nālandā sealing of Harsha, 165, 183, 218, 225
Nana (Durgā), *de.*, 179
Nānāghāṭ *ins.* of Sātakarni, 204
Nanda, *dy.*, 193
Nanda ruler, 190
Nandangarh *PE.* of Aśoka, 2
Nandapura, *tn.*, 166
Nandapur plate, 19, 127
Nanda-vithi, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 19
Nandi, emblem of Śiva, 217
nandipada, symbol, 213
Nāndsā *Yūpa ins.*, 200, 265, 268
nandyāvarta, symbol of Aranātha, 193
nara, human being, 223
Nārada, *au.*, 71
Nārada, celestial musician, 104

Naradatta, *r.* of Ayōdhyā, 227
Narasimha, incarnation of Vishṇu, 209, 211, 231
Narasinghgarh rock-shelter epigraph, 164, 175
Naravarman, *r.*, 107
Nārāyaṇa, Vishṇu, 167, 202, 209, 210, 211, 212
Nārāyaṇa Vāṭikā, 204, 265
Narēndra, Śarabhapurīya *k.*, 207
Narmadā, *ri.*, 27
Nāsik cave *ins.*, 9, 98
Nāsik *ins.* of Ābhīra Īśvarasēna, 142
Nāsik cave *ins.* of Nahapāna, 101, 102, 107, 123, 135, 138, 142
Nāsik cave *ins.* of Years 41, 42 and 45, 68
Nāsik *ins.* of Siri Puḷumāyi, 282
Nāsik and Kārle *ins.* of the time of Nahapāna, 86, 99
nata, dance, 104, 153
Naṭaka, *m.*, 205
Nāthaśarman, *m.*, 196
Navagrāma grnat of *Mahāraja* Hastin, 165
Navakarmiga, *off.*, 13
Navalakhi plates of Śīlāditya I, 23, 126
Nazim, M., 229
Nēpāl, *reg.*, 27
Neo-Brahmanism, 199, 202
Nidāna-Sūtra wk., 181
Nidhanpur plates of Bhāskaravarman, 57, 79
Nigāli Sāgar pillar *ins.*, 133
Nigama, guild, 72
Nikator (Jayadhana), *tit.*, 8
Nikāya, *wk.*, 156, 159, 188
Nimbakūpaka, *vi.*, 112
Ninḡoṇḍi grant of Prabhañjanavarman, 139
Nirgranthas, *rel.* sect, 5, 97, 190, 196, 198
Nirmaṇḍ *cp. ins.* of Samudrasēna, 160, 217, 219, 224
nirvāṇa, imancipation, 176, 197
Niṭṭūr *MRE.* of Aśoka, 2
nivīdharma, the custom regarding permanent endowments, 125
Nogawa grants of Dhruvasēna II, 23
Northern class of alphabet, 287
Northern Kshatrapas, *dy.*, 287
North Semitic, *lang.*, 283, 284
North West Frontier Province, 1, 2
Northwestern dialect of Aśokan inscriptions, 257, 261
nṛitya, dance, 105, 234
Nyāya, a system of Indian philosophy, 153, 161, 162
nyāyakaraṇika, *off.*, 79

O

Od...śākhā, Jaina sect, 193
ōda-yaṁtra (jala-yantra), hydraulic engine, 136
ōda-yaṁtrika, worker fabricating hydraulic engine, 136, 142
Ōdumbaragahvara, *vi.*, 166
Oertel F.O., 13
ōjas, or *samāsa-bhūyastva*, poetic quality, 267, 269

Ojha G.H., 284, 286
Okhā, Greek Euche, *f.*, 195
Okhārikā, Greek Eucharia, *f.*, 195
Old Indo-Aryan, *lang.*, *s.a.*, Vedic and Early Sanskrit, 257
Orissa, *state*, 1, 27, 190, 191, 230
Otfried Muller, 283

P

Pabhōsā cave *ins.* of Āshāḍhasēna, 185, 286
pāda, hemistich, 271
padakāra, shoe-maker ?, 141
pādamūla, temple attendant, 234
pādamūlika, temple attendant, 234
pādāvarta, *l.m.*, 130, 138
Padmaprabha, 197
padraka, *t.d.*, 25
padrapāla, *off.*, 13
Pāhārpur *cp. ins.* of the G.Y. 159 (478 A.D.), 19, 157, 158, 196, 235
Pahlavas, *peo.*, 8, 43
Pakistan, *co.*, 1
pala, liquid measure, 137
Pālāṭu Dheri Jar *ins.*, 184, 185
palavīthidakapālika, Inspector of meat-stalls, 14
Pāli, *lang.*, 264
Pāli literature, 4
Pāli Sūtras, *wk.*, 176
Palitānā plates of Dhruvasēna I, 75, 129
Palitānā plates of Śīlāditya I, 75
Palitānā plates of Gārulaka Simhāditya, 107
Pālkigundu *MRE.*, of Aśoka, 2
pallānakāra, saddler, 141
pallī, *t.d.*, 25
pamchanekāyika, *s.a. pañchanaikāyika* , 188
pamchavīras s.a. pañcha-vīras, 266
pana, coin, 139
pañchakula, 21
pañchamahāyajña, the five daily sacrifices, 87, 89, 232
Pañchanagarī, *tn.*, 19
pañchanaikāyika, *Bud. tea.*, 156
Pañchastūpa-nikāya, Jaina sect, 196
pañcha-vīras, the five mythical heros, 94, 205
Pañchayajña tapōvana, *l.*, 217
Pandey R.B., 257, 283, 284, 285, 286, 291
Pāṇḍurājā, goddess, 222
Pāṇḍuvaṁśa or Pāṇḍuvaṁśī, *dy.*, 206
Pāṇḍyas, *peo.*, 2
Pāṅgurāria *MRE.* of Aśoka, 2
Panjab, *reg.*, 212
Panjtār Kharōshṭhī *ins.* of year 122, 213
Pāṇinī, *au.*, 51, 105, 202, 261
Pāṇipātrika, *epi.* one who uses his hands as a bowl, 197
Pant G.N., 41, 42
Parākrama, *tit.*, 45
Parākramāṅka, *tit.*, 45
Paramabhāgavata, *epi.*, 182, 206, 207, 208
Paramabhaṭṭārakapādānudhyāta, *tit.*, 160
Paramabhaṭṭārikā-Mahādēvī, *tit.*, 94
Paramādityabhakta, *tit.*, 225, 236

Paramamāheśvara, epi., 182, 215, 216, 217
Paramasaugata, tit., 236
Paramavaishṇava, epi., 206
Paramēśvara, Śiva, 217
Paramēśvara, tit., 55
Paramōpāsaka, epi., 182
Parāśara, Pāśupata *tea.*, 214, 215
Parāśara, *gōtra*, 92
Pārāśariputra, epi., 92, 199
Pārāśava, name of a community, 92
Paridhasika-kula, Jaina sect, 193
Parishat, council of ministers, 6, 17
Parivāra-dēvatas, subsidiary deities, 219
Parivrājaka, *fa.*, 48
Pārśva, 23rd *tīrthaṅkara*, 190, 192, 193, 197
Parthia, *co.*, 44
Parthians, *peo.*, 42
Pārvati, consort of Śiva, 216, 217, 219, 220, 274, 275
pāsāda, (prāsāda), temple, 194
Pāśupata sect, 218
Pāśupapta Yōga, 215
Paśupati, Śiva, 214
pāṭaka, l.m., 138
Pāṭaliputra, *ca.*, 6
Pāṭaliputra, *tn.*, 42, 109, 190
Patañjali, *au.*, 41, 199, 226
pathaka, t.d., 25, 29, 30
Paṭichasamupade (Pratītya-samutpāda), *wk.*, 189
pāṭipati, off., 56
Patna, *tn.*, 108
paṭṭa, t.d., 25
paṭṭavāya or *paṭṭavāyaka*, silk-weaver, 135, 143
paṭṭavāya-śrēṇi, guild of silk-weavers, 102
paura, city-corporation, 10, 67
prativēdaka, off., 5, 6
PE. I, 4, 6
PE. IV, 3, 6, 64, 85
PE. V, 40, 42, 97, 98, 139
PE. VII, 3, 5, 6, 64, 100, 106, 136, 190, 198
Persia, *co.*, 56
Peshawar, *tn.*, 43, 178, 179
peṭakin, Bud. tea., 155, 156
pēṭha, t.d., 25
Petivamika-kula, Jaina sect, 192
Petuputrikā-śākhā, Jaina sect, 193
Phaguna, *m.*, 110
Phaguyaśa, *m.*, 104
Phoenicians *(Paṇis), peo.*, 283
Phoenician, script, 283, 284
Pidamahi (*Skt. pitāmahī*) grand mother, 195
Pillar Edicts of Aśoka, 2
pīlū s.a. Perso-Arabic *fil*, 48
pīlūpati, off., 48, 101
Pishṭapura, *tn.*, 231
Pishṭapurī or Pishṭapurikādēvī, Lakshmī, 221, 222, 231
Pispasi, *f.*, 93
Piṭaka, wk., 138, 156
piṭaka, a measure of capacity, 156
piṭaka-vāpa, l.m., 138
Pitakēśvara, *de.*, 168

Pitalkhōrā, *vi.*, 142
Pitalkhōrā Buddhist cave *ins.*, 108
Pithumḍa, *tn.*, 41, 42
Polekēśi II, Chālukya *k.*, 55
Poona plates of Prabhāvartiguptā, 45, 207
Poṭhayaśaka, *m.*, 10
pōṭṭala, a bundle, 133
pōṭṭalikāputra,, retail trader, 133
Prabhākara, *k.*, 107, 272
Prabhākaravardhana, Pushpabhūti *k.*, 27, 55, 89, 225
Prabhāvatī Guptā, Gupta princess married to Vākāṭaka *k.*, 92, 96, 207
Prabhudamā, *q.*, 94
pradēshṭṛi, off., 3, 64
prādēśika, off., 3, 4, 64
Pradōshaśarman, *feud.*, 89, 90, 167, 209
Pradyumna, one of the *pañchavīras*, 204, 205
Prāgjyōtisha, kingdom, 93
Prāgjyōtisha, *co.*, 202
Prajñā or Prajñāpāramitā, *de.*, 188
Prakāśadharman, *k.*, 274
Prakāśāditya, *k.*, 51
Prakrit, *lang.*, 161, 162, 255, 256, 257, 261, 263, 264, 265, 273, 290
Prakrits, dialects, 261
Prakrit Brāhmī *ins.* at Kirārī, 54
Prakrit influenced by Sanskrit, 256, 264
pramāṇalaṭhi (*pramāṇayashṭi*), measuring rod, 136
pramātāra, off., 27, 28, 72
pramathāchārya, Śaiva *tea.*, 217
Prakrit poets, 162
pramātṛi, off., 22, 23, 24, 28, 76, 78
praṇaya, tax, 123, 130, 131, 132
prāpa, t.d., 26
prārthārika, lapidary, 141
prasāda or *artha-vaimalya*, poetic quality (perspicuity of sense), 269
praśasti, eulogy, 267, 268, 270
praśishya, disciple's disciple, 158, 196, 214
Praśnavāhaka-kula, Jaina sect., 192
prastha, measure of capacity, 136
prastharika, stone-mason, 143
prastharika-śrēṇi, guild of stone-masons, 134
prathamakāyastha, Revenue collector, 20, 71
prathamakulika, land lord, 20, 71
prathamapustapāla, off., 21
prathāra, off., 22, 23
pratilōma, a type of inter-caste marriage, 92
Pratimānāṭaka, wk., 11
Pratisāra s.a. pratisāraka, off., 22, 24
Pratītya-samutpāda (Nidāna-sūtra) wk., 188, 189
prativēdaka, off., 5, 6
Pravararāja II, Śarabhapurīya *k.*, 207
pratōlī, gateway, 227
prāvārika, clock-maker, 101, 141
Prāvārika-vihāra, 141
prāvēśa, t.d., 26
Prince of Wales Museum plates of Gurjara *k.* Dadda III, 75, 89, 279
Priyadasi, epi., 40

Prithvishēṇa, *min.*, 15, 215, 219
Prithvishēṇa, *off.*, 48, 88
Prithviśvara, *n.* given to a Śiva *liṅga*, 215, 219
pudgala, matter, 191
pūga, popular court, 68
pūjā, worship, 188, 233, 235
Pūlēṇḍaka, *vi.*, 55
punch-marked coins, 212
Puṇḍarika, *n.* of a *sac.*, 201
Puṇḍranagara, *tn.*, 109, 110, 198
Puṇḍravardhana-bhukti, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 19, 20, 29, 46, 49, 50
Punjab, state, 8, 27, 43, 290
punyaśāla, alms-house, 108, 109, 142
purāṇa, coin, 138, 139, 142
Purāṇas, *wk.*, 40, 161, 202, 204, 210, 214
Puranic religion, 110, 200, 201
Puri B.N., 9, 12, 16, 179
Puri, *di.*, 1
purusha, linear measure, 129, 136
purusha, *off.*, 3, 6
Purusha, *n.* of Vishṇu, 212
Purusha-Nārāyaṇa, 210
Purushapura (Peshawar), *tn.*, 180
Purusha-sūkta, 210
pūrvā, eulogy, 271
Pushkalāvati, *tn.*, 290
pushpa, offering of flowers, 188, 233, 235
Pushpabhūti, family, 225
Pushpadanata, *s.a.* Suvidhinātha, 9th *tirthaṅkara*, 197
pushpārchana or *pushpamālya*, s.a. *pushpa*, 233
Pushyamitra, Śuṅga *k.*, 7, 40, 41, 85, 177, 182, 199, 201, 235, 265
Pushymitrīya-kula, Jaina sect, 193
Pusinī, *f.*, 110
pustapāla, *off.*, 20, 21, 24

Q

Queen's *PE.*, 91, 92, 93, 106

R

Raghupati, Rāma, 211
Raghuvaṁśa, *wk.*, 280, 283
Raichur *di.*, 2
rājabhāvyakara, tax, 131, 132
Rājagriha, *tn.*, 196
rājalikpikara, royal scribe, 161
Rājamahal, *tn.*, 57
Rājan, *tit.*, 9, 11, 93
Rājaputra, *tit.*, 23
Rājarāja, *tit.*, 8
Rajasthan, state, 2, 134, 201, 202, 204, 234
rājasthānīya, *off.*, 22, 27, 28
Rājātirāja, *tit.*, 11, 179, 195, 200
Rājataraṅgiṇī, *wk.*, 16, 144
Rajendralal, 162
Rājghāṭ seals, 168
Rājgir, *tn.*, 229
Rājgir Nēminātha image *ins.*, 197
Rājgir Sōn Bhaṇḍār cave *ins.*, 196

Rājjila, *ch.*, 167, 221
rajju, cord, 3
rajjuka or *rajjugrāhaka*, *off.*, 3
rājñī q., 93
Rājpūt, clan., 93
Rājputānā, *reg.*, 93
rajuka or *rājūka*, *off.*, 3, 4, 5, 7, 64, 65, 66
Rājūla or Rājuvula or Rājūvula W. Kshatrapa *r.*, 9, 92, 93, 178, 205, 266, 287
Rājyavardhana, Pushpabhaūti, *k.*, 55, 225, 236
Rāma, incarnation of Vishṇu, 208, 211
Rāmagiri, *mod.* Ramṭek, *vi.*, 211
Rāmaguptpa, Gupta, *k.*, 197
Rāmāvatāra, incarnation of Vishṇu, 211
Rāmāyaṇa, *wk.*, 268
Ramesh K.V., 133, 137, 255, 256, 273, 288
Rāmgaṛh hill, 97, 105
Rāmi, *f.*, 196
Rāmpurvā *PE.* of Aśoka, 2
raṇabhāṇḍāgārādhikaraṇa, *off.*, 49
Raṇagraha, Gurjara, *k.*, 226
Rantidēva, *k.*, 97
rāshṭra, *t.d.*, 26
rāshṭrapati, *off.*, 22, 26
rāshṭrīya, viceroy, 2, 128
rathika, charioteer, 14
Rati, goddess, 227
rati, weight, 139
ratnagriha, the sanctuary of a Buddha image, 180
Raudra, one of the nine sentiments, 270
Ravikīrit, *m.*, 92, 282
Ravila, composer, 272
Raviśānti, composer, 275
rayagini (*rajaki*), wife of a dyer, 141
Raychaudhuri H.C., 11, 85, 103, 205
RE. I, 97, 100, 103, 199, 202
RE. II, 2, 99, 106, 108
RE. III, 3, 4, 6, 64
RE. V, 5, 65, 85, 177
RE. VI, 5, 6
RE. VIII, 103, 175, 177
RE. IX, 90, 176
RE. XI, 95
RE. XII, 5, 39, 99, 176, 190, 235
RE. XIII, 2, 40, 90, 177
Reh. *ins.*, 213
Rhys Davids, 133
Riddhapur plates of Prabhāvatiguptā, 207, 211
Ṛigvēda, *wk.*, 89, 165, 202, 210
Rishabha, Jaina *tirthaṅkara*, 192, 193
Rishimitra, *m.*, 86
Rishṭhisheṇa gōtra, 13
Risthal *ins.* of Prakāśadharman, 273
Ṛitusaṁhāra, *wk.*, 271
Rock Edicts, *ins.*, 1
Rōhiṇimitra, Bud. tea., 155
Rome, *co.*, 44
Roṭa-Jayavriddhi, *m.*, 181
Roṭa-Siddhavṛiddhi, *m.*, 164, 181
Rudrabhūti, Kshatrapa *r.*, 10
Rudrabhaṭṭārikā, Ikshvāku *q.*, 91

Rudradāman, W.Ksharapa *k.*, 8, 9, 67, 86, 91, 92, 104, 107, 129, 132, 154, 162, 267
Rudradāsa, *feud.*, 272
Rudradēva, *pr.*, 44
Rudrasēna I of the *dy.*, of Chashṭana, 91, 164
Rudrasēna II, Vākāṭaka *k.*, 91, 92, 96, 207
Rudrasimha, Kshatrapa *r.*, 94
Rudrasōma, *m.*, 196
Rudrila, *m.*, 86, 200
Rummindēi pillar *ins.*, 123, 130, 131, 175, 286
rūpa, currency, 153
rūpadaksha, banker, 97
rūpaka, coin, 139
rupakāraka, sculptor, 141
Rūpanāth, *MRE.* of Aśoka, 2

S

Śabdālaṁkāra, 274, 275
Sabhūti, *m.*, 10
sabrahmachārin, Vedic student, 158
Śachi, Indra's consort, 273
sachiva, *min.*, 17
Sadāśivāchārya, Śaiva, *tea.*, 217
sādhu, a merchant, 133
Śaggaḷa-Prakāśa, *m.*, 111
Sahai B., 108
Sahasrām *MRE.*, of Aśoka, 2
Sahasraraśmi, Sun-God, 222
Sāhityadarpaṇa, *wk.*, 270
Sahni Daya Ram, 220
sāhukār, a merchant, 133
śaiksha, student, 158
śailālakas, *s.a. śailālins*, actors, 105
Śaiva, *epi.*, 183
Śaivas, *comm.*, 231
Śaivāchārya, Śaiva ascetic, 157, 161
Śaiva seals from Bhiṭā, 216
Śaiva seals from Rājghāṭ, 216
Śaiva temple, 213, 215
Śaivism, *rel.* sect, 111, 174, 198, 202, 203, 207, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 226, 236
Śaivite, *epi.*, 215
Śakas, *dy.*, 8, 43, 44, 85, 87
Śakas, *peo.*, 86
Śaka-Brāhmaṇas, *comm.*, 86
Śaka chiefs, 14
Śaka-Kshatrapas, *peo.*, 91, 94, 255
Śaka-Pahlavas, *dy.*, 8, 11
Śaka-Pahlavas, *peo.*, 7
Śaka race, 205, 282
Śakasena, Śātavāhana *k.*, 43
Śaka territories, 14
Śākala, *tn.*, 177
Śākadvipa, *reg.*, 223
Śākēta (Ayōdhyā), *tn.*, 41
śākhā, Jaina sect, 192, 193
Śakrāditya, *s.a.* Kumāragupta I, *k.*, 164, 165
Sakrāi, *vi.*, 234
Sakrāi stone *ins.* of 642-43 A.D., 221
Śākta, Tantric form of worship, 220

Śakti, *n.*, of Kārttikēya's weapon, 50, 58
Śakti, *m.*, 227
saktu, barley meal, 98
Śākuntalam s.a. Abhijñānaśākuntalam, *wk.*, 72
Śākya, *clan*, 181
Śākyamuni Buddha, 175, 178, 179, 184
Śālāturīya, *s.a.* Pāṇini, *au.*, 162
Saletore B.A., 85
Saletore R.N., 72, 74, 98, 100, 122
śalyōddharaṇa, *off.*, 16
Samāchāradēva, *k.*, 112
Śāmāḍhyā, *f.*, 195
śamaṇasāvikā, female lay-disciple of an ascetic, 97
Sāmanta, *tit.*, 23
Samāpā, *tn.*, 5
samatā, poetic quality, 271
samatā, impartiality in legal procedure, 65
Sāmavēda, *wk.*, 89
samaya, doctrine, 217
Sāmba, devotee of the Sun-god, 223
Sāmba, one of the *pañchavīras*, 205
Śāmbapāla, Revenue collector, 20
Sāmbapura, *n.* of a *rel.* establishment, 222
sambhōga, Jaina sect, 192, 193
Śaṁbhu, Śiva, 215, 217
Saṁbodhi (Bōdh-Gayā), *vi.*, 175
Saṁbodhi, place where the Buddha attained enlightenment, 103
Saṁbodhi, Bōdhi Tree, 177
Saṁgha, *Bud.* organization, 163, 174, 175, 181, 184
Saṁgharakhita, *m.*, 110, 184
Saṁgharakshita, *Bud.* Monk., 110
Saṁghila, *m.*, 181
Saṁhitās, *wk.*, 227
Sāmidata, *k.*, 7
Sāmidata (Kumāradatta), *m.*, 111, 226
Samika, *m.*, 226
Samikā, *f.*, 226
Śamīpadravāṭaka, *vi.*, 23
samitakara, flour-maker, 134
samitakara-śrēṇi, guild of flour-makers, 142
Samitya, *Bud.* Sect, 185, 186
Saṁkarshaṇa, one of the *pañchavīras*, 204, 205
Saṁkāsiya-śākhā, Jaina sect, 193
Saṁkshōbha, Uchchakalpa *k.*, 221
Sāmōli *ins.* of the time of Guhila Śīlāditya, 134, 221
Sāmrāṭ, *tit.*, 274
Samudragupta, Gupta *k.*, 15, 16, 18, 27, 45, 47, 50, 87, 99, 103, 104, 105, 154, 180, 201, 206, 207, 267, 269, 270
Samudrasēna, *k.*, 219, 225
Samvaṅgiyas, *peo.*, 109, 110
Saṁyutta-nikāya, *wk.*, 159
Sāñchi, *vi.*, 2, 180
Sāñchi *ins.* of the year 22, 11
Sāñchi *ins.* of Jivadāman, 264
Sāñchi *ins.* of Chandragupta II, 139, 180
Sāñchi *ins.* of 450-51 A.D., 164, 187
Sāñchi stone *ins.* of the reign of Kumārgupta or Skandagupta, 180
Sāñchi *ins.* on *stūpa* I, 41, 68

Sāñchi *PE.* of Aśoka, 175, 184
Sāñchi *stūpa* , 177, 182
Sāñchi *stūpa* No. II, 185
Sāñchi *stūpa ins.*, 7, 66, 94, 140, 203, 212, 226, 227
sandhivigrahādhikaraṇādhikṛita, off., 54
sāndhivigrahādhikṛita, off., 22, 23, 54
sāndhivigrahika, off., 16, 17, 18, 46, 47, 54, 268
Sandhyā, goddess, 274
Saṅgamānaka, *vi.*, 23
Saṅghamitra, *Bud.* Monk, 183
saṅghārāma, Bud. Monastery, 178
Śanikā, *f.*, 95
Sañjēli, *cp.* charter of Bhūta, 99, 127, 138, 141
Sañjēli *cp.* charter of Mātṛidāsa, 99
Sañjēli *cp. ins.* of Tōramāṇa, 90, 99, 102, 133, 134, 137, 140
Śaṅkara, *m.*, 197
Śaṅkara, commentator, 233
Śaṅkarā, Pārvati, 221, 234
Saṅkhēḍā grant of Śāntilla, 138
Saṅkhēḍā plates of Dadda II, 226
Saṅkhēḍā plate of Raṇagraha, 226
Śaṅkhika, *m.*, 236
Sankisa, *vi.*, 184
sanmārjjana, cleaning, 233
Sanskrit, *lang.*, 161, 162, 255, 256, 257, 261, 264, 265, 273, 282, 290
Sanskrit grammar, 162
Sanskrit influenced by Prakrit, 256, 264
Sanskrit poets, 162
santaka (satka), belonging to, 125
Śāntinātha, sixteenth Jaina *tīrthaṅkara*, 193
Sapta-Sōma-saṁsthā, n., of a *sac.*, 200
Śarabhapurīya, *dy.*, 162, 163
Sarasvati, goddess, 104
Sarasvati, Jaina, *de.*, 193
Sārikā, *n.*, of a bird, 77
Sārnāth, *vi.*, 2, 180, 186
Sārnāth Buddhist image inscriptions, 12, 13
Sārnāth image *ins.* of Kumāragupta II, 180
Sārnāth *ins.* of the reign of Budhagupta, 181
Sārnāth *PE.* of Aśoka, 6, 175, 184, 258
Sārnāth stone *ins.* of Prakaṭāditya, 209, 212
Sārnāth umbrella *ins.*, 188
Sārangarh *cp. ins.* of Mahā-Sudēva, 162
Śārṅgin, *n.* of Vishṇu, 212
sārthavāha, itinerant trader, 20, 71, 133
sārthavāhinī, wife of a caravan leader, 94
Śarvanāga, *off.*, 15, 19
Śarvanātha, Uchchakalpa *k.*, 48, 221, 222
Sarva-rāj-ōchchhēttā, tit., 45
Sarvāstivāda, *Bud.* school, 179, 184
Sarvāstivādin, *Bud.* school, 155, 178, 184, 185, 186, 187, 261
Sarvatāta, Kāṇva *k.*, 92, 199, 204, 206
sarvatōbhadra, fourfold image, 193
Śarvavarman, Maukhari *k.*, 88, 182, 216
Śaśāṅka, Gauḍa *k.*, 55, 79, 182
Śasāṅka's coins, 182

Sāstri Hirananda, 14, 276
Śātakarṇi, Śātavāhana *k.*, 91
Śatasāhasrī-Saṁhitā, *n.*, of *Mahābhārata*, 161, 163
satī, rite of self immolation, 96
Satiyaputras, *peo.*, 2
sattra, alms-house, 89, 108, 166, 214, 222, 224, 227, 230, 234
sattra, an alms house; one of the five *mahāyajñas*, 232
Sātvata, tit., 207
Satya Shrava, 43, 96, 208
Satyasura, *m.*, 208
saugandhaka (saugandhika), off., 14, 141
śaulkika, off., 22, 24
Saurashtra, *reg.*, 14, 76, 208
Śauri, Vishṇu, 277
Savadēvāyatana-saṁkhāraka, tit. of Khāravela, 235
Savapāsaṁdapūjaka, tit. of Khāravela, 235
Savitṛi, Sun-god, 223, 224
Sūryamitra, *m.*, 86
Scythians, *peo.*, 42, 267
Scythians, *dy.*, 96
Scytho-Parthian, *dy.*, 257
Seals of Avantivarman, 182
Seals of Śarvavarman, 182
Second Buddhist Council, 183
Second Edict at Siddāpura, 95
Second Jaina Council, 198
Second Magadhan empire, 7
Śegrava, *gōtra*, 86
Sehore, *di.*, 2
Semitic alphabet, 283
Sen A., 261
Sēnakapāṭ *ins.* of the time of Śivaguptpa Bālārjuna, 127, 138, 161
sēnāpati, off., 7, 8, 10, 14, 16, 21, 41, 42, 43, 55, 56
Sēnāpati Pushyamitra, Śuṅga *k.*, 7
Sēndrakas, *dy.*, 52
Separate Kaliṅga Edict I, 5, 64, 65
Sēridraha -vāpi, *n.* of a well, 130
sētaka, weight, a liquid meausre and a measure of capacity, 137
Sethe, 284
Set-Mahet image *ins.* of the time of Kanishka, 12
Set-Mahet image *ins.* of the time of Kanishka or Huvishka, 155, 184
sēvaka, attendant, 27, 29
Seven Sōma sacrifices, 214
Shahbāzgaṛhi, *vi.*, 1, 290
Shahabāzgaṛhi Rock Edicts, 256, 257, 261
Shahadaur Kharōshṭhi *ins.*, 138
Shah-ji-ki-ḍheri, *l.*, 178
Shah-ji-ki-ḍheri casket *ins.*, 184
Shāhpur stone image *ins.* of Ādityasēna, 224
Shama Sastry, 58
Shar-i-kuma *ins.*, 283
Sharma Baijanath, 27
Sharma Brijnarain, 90
Sharma G.R., 213

Sharma R.S., 85, 88, 124
Shashi Kant, 104, 191
Shastri Ajay Mitra, 131, 162, 163
Shōrkōṭ copper cauldron *ins.* of 403 A.D., 186
Siddāpura Edict of Aśoka, 95, 290
siddha, a Jaina saint, 191, 195
siddhas, semi-divine beings, 223
Siddhamātrikā, script, 256, 283, 289, 290
Siddhasēna, *off.*, 24
Sigālovāda-sutta, *wk.*, 176
Śikharasvāmin, *min.*, 15, 17, 88
Śīlāditya I, Maitraka *k.*, 52, 55, 154
Śīlāditya II, Maitraka *k.*, 52
Śīlāditya III, Maitraka *k.*, 52, 54
Śīlāditya IV, Maitraka *k.*, 52, 54
Śīlāditya V, Maitraka *k.*, 52
Śīlāditya VI, Maitraka *k.*, 52
Śīlāditya VII, Maitraka *k.*, 55
Śīlapaksha, *m.*, 111
Śīlavarman, *k.*, 265
Silharā cave *ins.*, 7, 92
simāpradātā off., 79
Simhala *s.a.* Ceylon, *co.*, 50
Simha-Mahēndra, *tit.*, 45
Simhanāda, *off.*, 56
Simhapura, *tn.*, 166
Sind, *prov.*, 43
Sindh, *co.*, 27, 43, 56
Sindhu, *ri.*, 41, 50
Sinha G.P., 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 54, 55
Sinkhot steatite casket *ins.*, 8
Sircar D.C., 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 22, 23, 24, 42, 47, 48, 49, 69, 75, 76, 85, 91, 96, 101, 102, 104, 110, 125, 126, 129, 136, 138, 139, 141, 175, 202, 209, 222, 230, 266, 285, 290
Sirpur *ins.* of Śivagupta Bālārjuna, 217, 233
Sirōli *ins.* of Śarvavarman, 107
śishya, disciple, 157, 158, 196
śisinī, *f.* student, 158
Sītābengā cave, 105
Śiva, *de.*, 166, 179, 180, 182, 183, 194, 212, 213, 215, 219, 220, 224, 274, 275, 278
Śivadatta, *min.*, 200
Śivagupta Bālārjuna, Pāṇḍuvaṁśī *k.*, 217, 218, 236
Śivaliṅga, 194, 213, 214, 215, 231
Śivaliṅgaka, *vi.*, 112
Sivanandi (Śivanandi), *m.*, 111
Śivarakshita, *m.*, 213
Sivaramamurti C., 288
Śivaseṇa, Kshatrapa *r.*, 8
Śivathala, Śaiva sanctuary, 213
Skanda, Kārttikēya, 220, 226
Skandabhaṭa, *off.*, 54
Skandagupta, Gupta *k.*, 45, 96, 105, 107, 129, 164, 208, 216, 231
Skandagupta, *off.*, 29, 56
Smith V.A., 40, 44, 63, 100, 104
Smṛitis, *wks.*, 63, 69, 71, 72, 73, 75, 79, 91, 93
snapana, ceremonial bathing of god, 188, 233, 235
Śōdāsa, W. Kshatapa *r.*, 9, 205, 287

shōḍaś-ōpachāra, sixteen ways of doing homage to a deity, 188
Sohāwal *cp. ins.* of Śarvanātha, 73, 88, 112, 131, 166, 227
Sohgaurā bronze plaque *ins.*, 1, 109, 110, 112, 190, 256
sōma, divine drink, 273
Sōmadatta, *k.*, 79
Sōmadēva, *m.*, 200
Sōmakuṇḍikāgrāma, *vi.*, 29
Sōmatrāta, *tea.*, 157
Sōnpat copper-seal of Harsha, 183, 218, 225
Sōpārā Edicts, 1, 259, 286
Śorpāraga, *tn.*, 107
Sorso plates of Sōmadatta, 73
Soter (Trātā), *tit.*, 8
South semitic, script, 283, 284
Southern alphabet, 287
Southern dialect of Aśokan inscriptions, 257, 260
Spooner, 179
śramaṇa, *Bud.* Monk, 176
Śramaṇas, *comm.*, 235
śramaṇ-āchārya, Jaina *tea.*, 157
Śrāvasti-bhukti, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 29
śrēṇī, Guild, 143
śrēṇī, popular court, 68, 69
śrēṇibala, guild of soliders, 143
śrēshṭhin, banker, 71, 133, 234
Śrī, Lakshmī, 212, 277
Śrī-Aśvamēdha-Mahēndra, *tit.*, 45
Śrīdēva, *m.*, 166
Śrīdharavarman, Śaka, *r.*, 10
Śrī-mahā-vihāra, 164
Śrī-Mahēndra, *tit.*, 45
Śrī-mātā, *de.*, 97
Śriparvata, mountain, 43
Śripura (*mod.* Sirpur), *tn.*, 217, 236
Śrī-raṇabhāṇḍāgār-ādhikaraṇa, *off.*, 20
Śrīsōma, *k.*, 268
Srivastava V.C., 223, 224, 225
Śrīvikrama, *tit.*, 45
Srugandha, *m.*, 208
Sten Konow, 26
Sthalī, *t.d.*, 25
Sthānīya-kula, Jaina sect, 192
Sthāvara, *m.*, 111
Sthaviravādins, *Bud.* school, 183, 185, 186
Stone *ins.* of Śarvanātha, 216
Stratega=Strategos, Greek *tit.*, 8
stūpa, 107, 175, 178, 179, 180, 181, 187, 189, 193, 194, 230, 272
Subāhita, *off.*, 161
Śubhakīrtti, *off.*, 79
Sudarśana lake, 9, 106, 107, 128, 129, 136
Sudasana, *n.* of a *Yaksha*, 229
Sudēvarāja, Śarabhapuriya, *k.*, 207
Sudhanvī, *tit.*, 45
Śūdra, caste, 84, 85, 90
Śūdras, *comm.*, 88
Śūdraka, *au.*, 70
Sugata, Buddha, 181, 236
Sui vihāra, 261
Śukranīti, *wk.*, 43

Sukthankar, 26
Sulabdha, *off.*, 41
Śūlikas, *peo.*, 57
śulka, tax, 24, 123, 130, 131, 132
sumana, ceremonial offering of flowers to god, 196, 235
Sumaṇḍala plates of the time of Pṛithvīgraha, 157
Sunāo Kala plates of Saṁgamasiṁha, 73
Śuṅga, *dy.*, 7, 41, 66, 68, 85, 177, 255
Śuṅga, *fa.*, 41, 202
Śuṅga alphabet, 286, 287
sūpakārapati, *off.*, 22, 24, 101
Supavāsa, *n.* of a *Yaksha*, 229
Supratishṭhitavarman, *pr.* of Kāmarūpa, 58
Surāshṭra, *reg.*, 9, 54
Surat plates of Vyāghrasēna, 73
Sūrya, *de.*, 194
Sūryavarman, Maukhari *pr.*, 103, 154, 215
Suśarman, *k.*, 161
Susthitavarman, *k.* of Kāmarūpa, 57
Susuniā Rock *ins.*, 207
Sutanukā, *f.*, 97
sutāntikini, a female versed in the *Bud. wk.*, Sūtrānta, 94
Sūtras, *wk.*, 87
Sūtras of Śīlālin, *wk.*, 105
Sūtra-piṭaka, *wk.*, 159, 188
Sutta-nipāta, *wk.*, 176
Suvarna, coin, 138, 139
Suvarṇagiri, *tn.*, 2
Suvarnakāra, goldsmith, 141
Suvarshakas (Kāśyapīyas), *Bud.*, sect, 185
Suviśākha, governor, 9, 86, 107, 129
Svāmi, *epi.* of Kārttikēya, 226
Svāmin, *tit.*, 9
Svāmidāsa, *feud.*, 272
Svāmi-Mahāsēna, Kārttikēya, 227
Svarga, heaven, 176
Svastika, Jaina symbol, 192, 213
Svatiguta, *m.*, 110
Svayambhu, *off.*, 18, 19
Śvētāmbara, Jaina school, 198
Śvētavarāhasvāmin, Vishṇu, 209, 211
Swat, *vi.*, 8
Swat country, 261
Swat Relic Vase *ins.* of Theodoros, 178, 251
Syria, *co.*, 40, 177

T

taila, oil, 99, 188, 233, 234
tailika, oil-man, 143
tailika-śrēṇi, guild of oil-millers, 135
Takka, *reg.*, 109
Takshadatta, *m.*, 167, 278
Takshaśilā (Taxila), *tn.*, 203
Tāḷagunda *ins.* of Kākusthavarman, 282
talavāṭaka, adjoining land, 223
Talēśvara *cp. ins.*, of Dyutivarman, 48, 72, 73, 76, 99, 101, 163, 166
Talēśvara plate of Vishṇuvarman, 102, 129, 135, 137, 139
tāmbōlikarma, a worker in betel, 100
Tāmraparṇi, *ri.*, 2

Tārā, or Tārādēvi, *Bud. de.*, 188, 235
Tarānāth, 186
Taravara, *tit.*, 16
Thatāgataratna or Ratnatraya, 237
Taxila, *tn.*, 1, 2, 39, 178, 198, 290, 291
Taxila *cp. ins.* of Patika, 8, 155, 178, 187
Taxila seals, 213
Taxila silver scroll, 261
Taxila silver vase *ins.*, 8
Taylor, 285
Terracotta sealing from Kumrahāra, 100, 108
Tewari S.P., 10
Thana, *di.*, 1
Thāneswar, kingdom, 55
Thaper Romila, 90
Thaplyal K.K., 56, 88, 100, 168
Theodoros, Indo-Greek *k.*, 8
Theodoros, *off.*, 178
Thera Nora, *m.*, 228
Third Buddhist Council, 183
Thomas F.W., 3, 64, 104
Tiber, *ri.*, 11
Tibet, *co.*, 290
Tilabhaṭṭaka, *off.*, 47
tila-pishaka, oil-miller, 135
Tipperah *cp.* grant of Lōkanātha, 89, 92, 160, 167, 209, 233, 276
Tīra-bhukti, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 18
Tīrath Rock *ins.*, 178
Tirthankara, *epi.* of the 24 great leaders of the Jaina faith, 190, 193, 197
Tīvara, Mauryan *pr.*, 92
Tīvara, Pāṇḍava *k.*, 206, 217
Tons, *ri.*, 1
Tōramāṇa, Hūṇa, *k.*, 99
toraṇa or *pasāda toraṇa*, temple arch, 194, 205
Tor Dherai, *l.*, 261
Tor Dherai potsherds *ins.* of c. 200 A.D., 184
Tōsalī, *tn.*, 2, 5
Tōsalī, *prov.*, 4, 6
Tōshā, *f.*, 94, 205, 266
toyamda, tank, 95, 106
Traipiṭaka, *Bud. tea.*, 155, 156
Traipiṭakopādhyāya, *Bud. tea.*, 156
Traipiṭikā, *Bud. f. tea.*, 156
Traividya, *Bud. tea.*, 156
Traividya, versed in the three Vēdas, 87, 160, 166, 168, 277
Traividyasāmānya, *comm.* of Brāhmaṇas versed in the three Vēdas, 160, 165, 166, 167
Trayī, the three Vēdas, 153
Tripathi R.S., 56
Tripiṭaka, *Bud. wk.*, 95, 159
Tripravaraka, having three pravāras, 229
Tripurāntaka, Śiva, 215, 217, 224
Trirātra, *sac.*, 200, 201
Trisahasra-vidya, *epi.*, 162
Trisaṅgamaka, *vi.*, 112, 222
Trivēṇī, *vi.*, 110, 112
tulyamēya, tax, 131, 132

Tumain *ins.* of Kumāragupta, 45, 166, 215
Tumburu, celestial musician, 104
Tuśām rock *ins.*, 157, 158, 160, 207
Tuśām *ins.*, of 5th cent A.D., 157
Tushāshpa, *Yavana k.*, 2, 106
Tuvaṭaka Sutta, *wk.*, 159

U

Uchchhakalpa, *dy.*, 48, 131, 166, 227, 231
Uchenāgarī-śākhā, Jaina sect, 192
udāttatā, poetical quality, 269
Uayagiri Cave *ins.*, 47
Udayagiri Cave *ins.* of Chandragupta (II), 14, 16, 17, 45, 90, 162, 207, 215
Udayagiri Cave *ins.* of the time of Kumāragupta, 157, 197
Udayagiri hills, 191
Udayagiri and Khaṇḍagiri hills, 191
Udayapur *ins.* of Aparājita, 276
Uddehikīya-gaṇa, Jaina sect, 193
Udegolam *MRE.* of Aśoka, 2
Udita, *s.a.* Uditāchārya, *tea.*, 214, 215
Uḍiyana, *vi.*, 179
udraṅga, tax, 131, 132
Ujhatikā, Greek, *f.*, 195
Ujjain, *tn.*, 2, 52, 91, 282, 290
Ujjain coins, 212
Ujjayinī, *tn.*, 225
Umāchal Rock *ins.* of Surēndravarman, 209, 211
unmara, threshold, 77
Unnatamēgha, *m.*, 111
upādhyāya, *tea.*, 155, 156, 157, 158
upādhyāyinī, *f. tea.*, 155
upalēpana, *s.a. gandha*, besmearing, 233
upamāna, standard of comparison, 279, 281
upamēya, object of comparison, 279, 281
Upamita, Pāśupata *tea.*, 214, 215
Upamitēśvara, *n.* given to a Śivaliṅga, 214
Upanishad, *wk.*, 152, 199
uparika, *off.*, 9, 15, 18, 20, 22, 26, 27, 28, 30, 46, 49, 50
uparikara, tax, 131, 132
Upasak C.S., 283, 284, 285, 286
Upasēna, *Bud. tea.*, 181
upāsikā, *Bud.*, nun, 180
Upatisa-pasina, *wk.*, 159
Upēndra, *epi.* of Vāmana, 211
Upidadata or Opedadata (Upēndradatta), *m.*, 111
ūrṇasthāna, wool factory, 136
Urumuja, *fa.*, 213
Ushavadāta, Śaka *pr.*, 68, 99, 101, 123, 124
Utara, *off.*, 7
Utmānzai lamp *ins.*, 189
Utprēkshādhavani, suggestion of poetic fancy, 273
Uttamabhadrakas, *peo.*, 86
uttārakulika-vārika, *off.*, 78
Uttarāpatha, *reg.*, 227
Uttar Pradesh, state, 14, 43, 57, 202, 208

V

Vāchaka, Jaina *tea.*, 157, 159

vaḍhaki, carpenter, 140
vādita, instrumental music, 104, 153
Vadrapālī, *vi.*, 133
vādya, instrumental music, 105, 234
vādya-gīta, music as a temple ritual, 225
Vaidarbha or Vaidarbhī, *Skt.* poetic style, 267, 270, 271
Vainyagupta, *k.*, 48
Vairadēva, Jaina Ascetic, 196
Vaishṇavas, *comm.*, 217
Vaishṇava *maṭha*, 217
Vaishṇavī, one of the *saptamātṛikās*, 219
Vaishṇavism, *rel.* sect, 111, 198, 202, 203, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 212, 213, 214, 216, 218, 219, 226
Vaishṇavite emblem of Garuḍa, 206
vaiśvadēva, offering to Viśvēdēvas, 223, 232
Vaiśya, comm., 88
Vaiśya, caste, 84, 85, 90
Vaiśya Pushyagupta, viceroy, 2
Vaiśyavāṭaka, *vi.*, 88, 112, 227
vaitālika, bard, 234
Vājasanēya (white *Yajurvēda*), *wk.*, 160
Vājpeshka, Kushāṇa *k.*, 11, 12
Vakamihira, *m.*, 13
Vākāṭaka, *dy.*, 207, 215
Valabhī *reg.*, 182, 276, 279
Valabhī, *tn.*, 55, 166
Vālina, *m.*, 12
Vālmīki, *au.*, 272
Vāmana, *m.*, 278
Vāmanāvatāra, Dwarf incarnation of Vishṇu, 211
Vanaspara, Kshatrapa, *r.*, 12
Vanāyu, *co.*, 56
vaṇija, merchant 133
vāṇijaka, merchant, 133
vaṇika, merchant, 133, 234
vāpa-kshētra, cultivated field, 126, 127
Varāha or *Varāha-avatāra*, Boar incarnation of Vishṇu, 208, 209, 211
Varāhadāsa, *ch.*, 107
Varāha-purāṇa, *wk.*, 209
Varāhasiṁha, *off.*, 276
Vārāhī, one of the *saptamātṛikās*, 219
Vārāṇasī, *tn.*, 168, 196
Vāraṇa-gaṇa, Jaina sect, 192
Vardhamāna (Mahāvīra), 193
Vardhamāna-bhukti, *n.* of a *t.d.*, 25
Vardhamānakōṭi, *l.*, 56
Vagramarega-vihāra, 179, 184
Vārika, tribe, 201
Vārjanāgarī-śākhā, Jaina sect, 193
varṇa, caste, 84, 85
varṇāśrama, social order, 84, 85, 87, 88, 89, 91
varṇāśrama-dharma, social order, 85
varṇāśrama-vyavasthā, *s.a. varṇāśrama-dharma*, 89
vartmapāla, *off.*, 22, 24
Varuṇa, one of the *dikpālas*, 206
vasakara, bamboo-worker, 140, 142
Vasantgaḍh *ins.* of Varmalāta, 97, 167, 221

Vāsaṭā, *q.* mother, 236
Vāsishka, Kushāṇa *k.*, 11, 12
V.A. Smith, 40
vāstu, homestead, 126, 127
Vāsū, *f.*, 97
Vasubandhu, *au.*, 189
Vasudatta, *tea.*, 157
Vasudēva, father of Vāsudēva, 210, 212
Vāsudēva, Vishṇu, 179, 203, 204, 205, 212, 222, 230, 236
Vāsudēva, one of the *pañchavīras*, 205
Vāsudēva, Kushāṇa, *k.*, 11, 213
Vāsudēva temple, 205
Vāsudēva-Krishṇa, *de.*, 202, 204
Vasukiya, *vi.*, 26
Vāsula, composer, 274, 275
Vasumitra, Śuṅga, *pr.*, 41
Vatagōhāli, *vi.*, 196, 235
Vaṭakarasthāna, *vi.*, 221, 234
Vaṭanagara, *tn.*, 134, 232
Vatrabhaṭṭi, *off.*, 23, 54
Vats, Madho Sarup, 75
Vatsabhaṭṭi, composer, 270, 271, 272
Vātsaliya-kula, Jaina sect, 192
Vātsiputriya, or Vātsiputrika, *Bud.* sect, 185, 186
Vatsya-putra, *epi.*, 93
vavahāra (vyavahāra), civil law, 153
Vāyu-Purāṇa, *wk.*, 205
Vēdas, *wk.*, 87, 89, 152, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 160, 161, 166, 167, 168
Vēdāṅgas, *wk.*, 158, 161
Vedic goddess Śrī Lakshmī, 211
Vedic religion, 110, 111, 159, 174, 199, 200, 201, 205
Vedic sacrificial cult, 235
Vedic Vishṇu, 203, 210
vedikā, railing, 205
Verma B.S., 90, 213
Vesavādiya-gaṇa, Jaina sect, 193
Vēśpaśi, *m.*, 12
Vētravarman, *off.*, 18, 19, 20
Vibhaṅga, division, 189
Vibhishaṇavardhana, *k.*, 273
vidhi, Religious Law, 66, 153
Vidiśā, *tn.*, 7, 103, 141, 203, 204
Vidiśā stone image *ins.* of Rāmagupta, 197
Vidyādharī-śākhā, Jaina sect, 195
vihāra, monastery, 101, 109, 163, 164, 175, 180, 182, 187, 196, 230, 235
Vihāra-maṇḍala, group of *vihāras*, 164
Vihārasvāmin, the master of a monastery, 164
Vihārasvāminī, wife of a *vihārasvāmin* or the female owner of a *vihāra*, 164, 180
vihāra-yātra, pleasure tour, 103, 177
vihāra of the Lōkōttaras, 187
vihāra of Veśpasi, 164
Vijayamitra, Indo-Greek *k.*, 8
Vijayasēna, *off.*, 48
Vijayaśrī, *f.*, 195
Vikramāditya, *tit.*, 45
Vikramāditya I, Chālukya *k.*, 52
Vikramāditya II, Chālukya *k.*, 52

Vikramāditya of Ujjain, 282
Vima-Kadphises, 187
vimśōpaka, coin, 139
Vinaya, *wk.*, 156
Vinayadhara, *Bud. tea.*, 156, 159
Vinayāditya, Chālukya *k.*, 52
vināyaka, *Bud. tea.*, 156
Vinaya-piṭaka, *wk.*, 159
Vinaya-samukase, *wk.*, 159, 188
vinayasthitisthāpaka, *off.*, 17, 18
vinayasthiti-sthāpak-ādhikaraṇa, *off.*, 20
Vinhukā, an abbreviation for Vishṇudattā or Vishṇurakshitā, *f.*, 111
Viruṭēśvara, *n.* of Śiva, 217
viniyuktaka, *off.*, 22, 23
Vipula, *tn.*, 198
Vīra, heroic sentiment, 270
Vīras, *pañchavīras*, 205
Viradēva, Jaina *tea.*, 157
Virajōguhā, *n.* of a cave, 231
Virajōguhāsvāmin, god Narasiṁha, 209, 211, 231
Viraṇēśvara, *de.*, 166
Virapurushadatta, Ikshvāku *k.*, 91
Virasēna Śāba, *off.* and *min.* of Chandragupta II, 16, 17, 45, 47, 162, 215
Virji K.J., 25, 26, 27, 54, 164, 182, 216, 226
Viśākha, Ḳārttikēya, 226
Viśākhadatta, *m.*, 227
Viśākhadēva *r.* of Ayōdhyā, 227
Viśēshaka, clustering of verses in threes, 270
vishaya, *t.d.*, 9, 13, 15, 18, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30
vishay-ādhikaraṇa, *off.*, 19, 21
vishayapati, *off.*, 9, 13, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 30, 46
Vishṇu, *de.*, 180, 194, 201, 202, 206, 207, 208, 210, 211, 219, 224, 229, 230, 231, 276, 278
Vishṇupada, *n.* of a hill, 207
Vishṇupālitabhaṭṭa, *m.*, 88
Vishṇushēṇa, *k.*, 75, 76, 95, 135, 202
Vishṇushēṇa's charter, 95, 99, 100, 102
Vishṇutrāta, *tea.*, 157
vishṭi, free labour, 123, 130, 131, 132
Viśvadēva, *m.*, 110
viśvāsa off., 13, 14, 21
viśvasika s.a. viśvaśika and *viśvāśika*, *off.*, 13
Viśvavarman, *k.*, 208, 219
vithi, *t.d.*, 19
Vodva-stūpa, 194
Vogel, 91, 186, 229
vohāri (vohārika), magistrate, 70
vrajabhūmika, *off.*, 6, 99
Vṛishṇi clan, 205, 210
Vyāgrachōraka, *vi.*, 112
Vyāghra-parākrama, *tit.*, 45
vyākhyā, exposition, 217
vyavahāra, legal procedure, 65, 66
vyūha, 219

W

Wala *ins.* of Guhasēna, 23, 75, 109

Waldschmidt E., 262
Wandh *ins.* of Rudrasimha I, 95
Wardak, *vi.*, 261
Wardak vase *ins.* of Year 51, 179, 184
Wema Kadphises, Kushāṇa *k.*, 213
Western dialect of Aśokan inscriptions, 257, 259
Western variety of the Gupta alphabet, 288
William Jones, 283

Y

yāga, sacrificial ceremony, 217
Yājñavalkya, *au.*, 68
Yājñavalkya-smṛiti, *wk*, 68
Yajñavarman, Maukhari, *k.*, 88
Yaksha, semie divine being, 229
Yaksha-Sūra-Vihāra, 164
Yakshavatsa, *off.*, 48
Yama, one of the *dikpālas*, 206
yamalavāpi, twin well, 216
Yamarakhitā, *f.*, 111
Yamunā, *ri.*, 1
yānaśālāyudhagharika, officer incharge of carriage-shed and armoury, 14
yantra-kuṭi, oil mill, 135
Yāpaniya-saṁgha, Jaina sect, 191
Yaśasträta, *m.*, 207
Yaśasträta, *tea.*, 157
Yaśōdharman, Aulikara *k.*, 51, 216, 274
Yaśōmatı, *f.*, 276, 277
Yaśōvihāra, 164, 181
Yaudhēyas, tribe, 86, 226, 227
Yavana, Greek, 203
Yavanas, *peo.*, 2, 5, 41, 106
Yavanarāja Tushāshpa, viceroy, 2
Yeṟṟagudi RE. of Aśoka, 1
Yōdhāvaka, *n.* of a monastery, 187
Yōgāchārya, *tea.* of Yōga philosophy, 160
Yōgēśvara, *n.* of Śiva, 216
yugma, clustering of verses in twos, 270
yukta, *off.*, 3, 4, 17
yūpa, sacrificial post, 200, 201, 220, 230
Yūpa ins. from U.P. and Rajasthan, 265
Yuvarāja, *tit.*, 9, 10

Z

Zeda *ins.* of the reign of Kanishka, 95, 106, 184
Zeda *ins.* of the Year 11, 95

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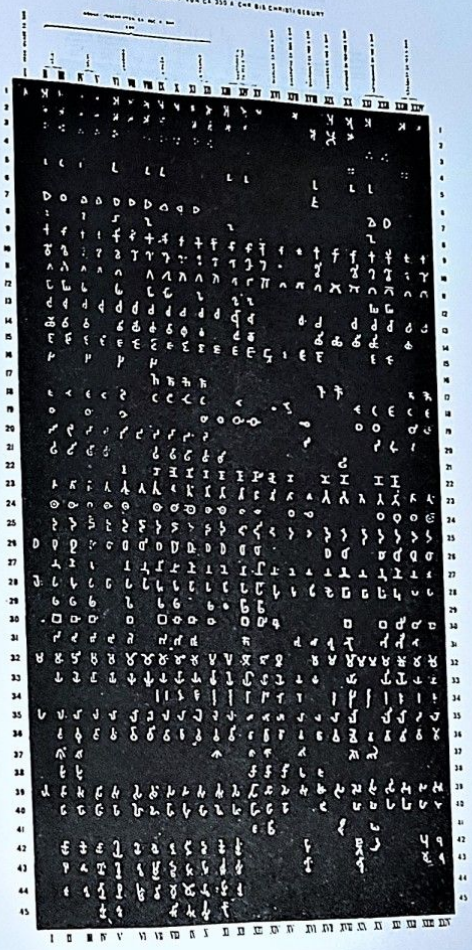

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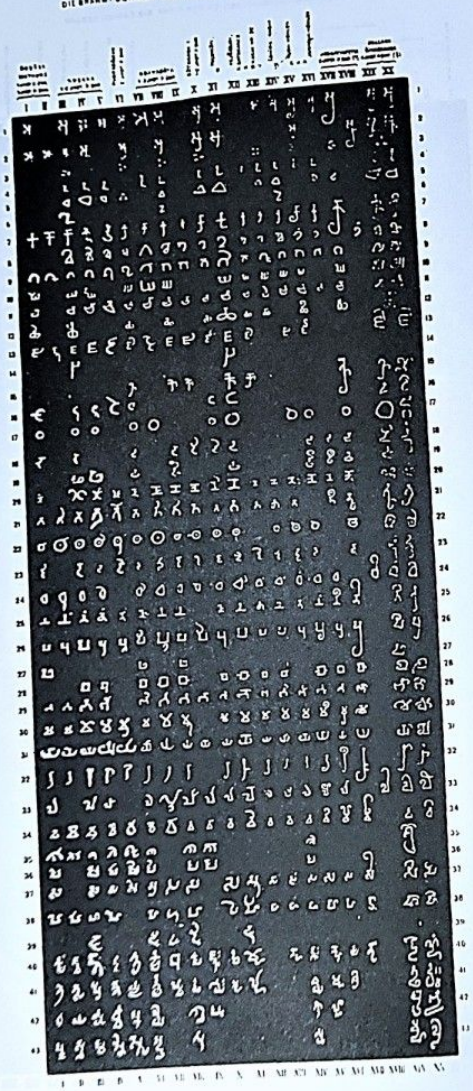

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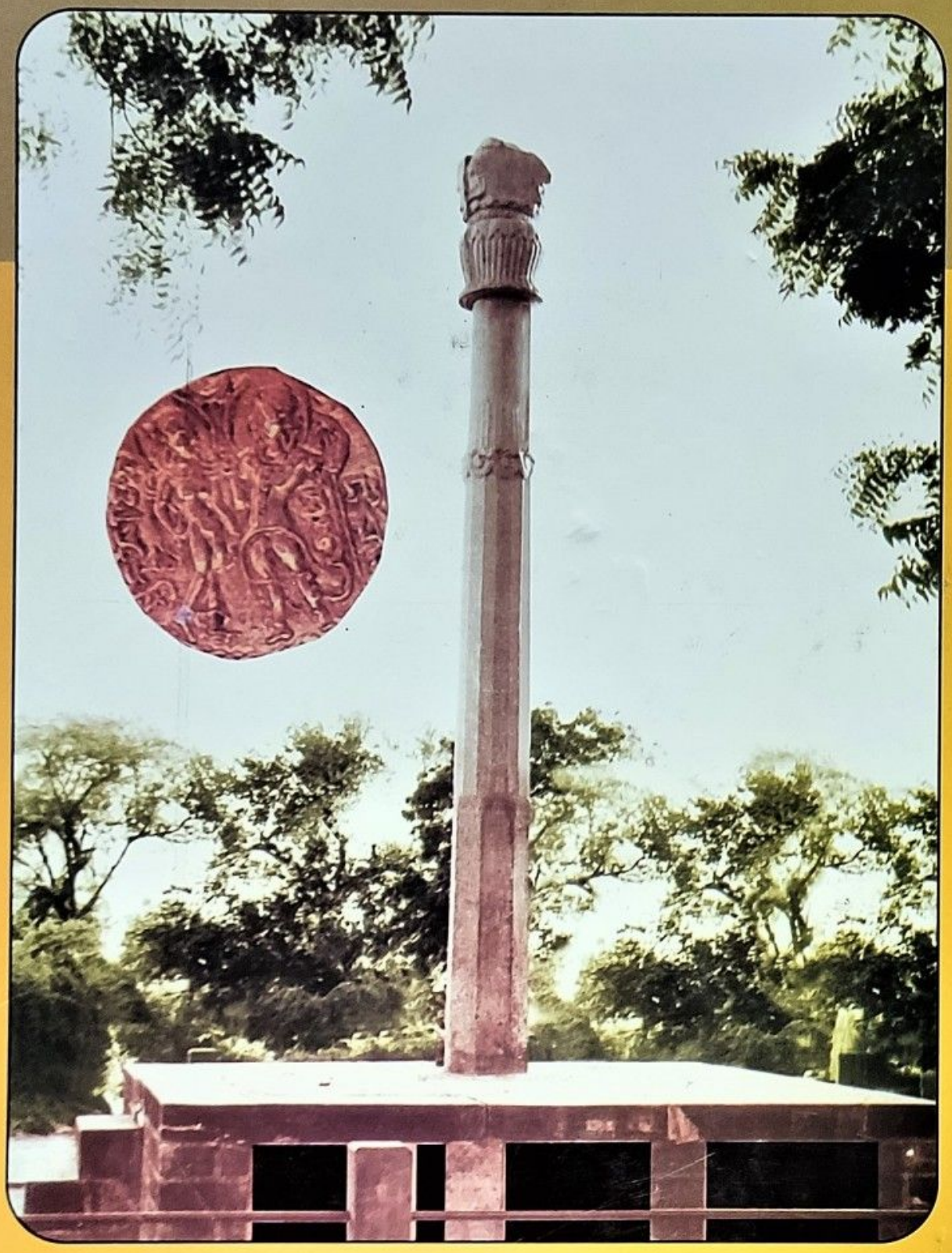
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. K. M. Bhadri (b. 1946) joined Archaeological Survey of India in 1969 after completing his **M.A. degree (Sanskrit)** from the Karnatak University, Dharwad. Later he acquired **M.A. degree in Ancient Indian History and Epigraphy** from the same University and **P.G. Diploma in Archaeology** from the Institute of Archaeology, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi. He was awarded Ph.D. degree by the University of Mysore for his thesis entitled **"A Cultural Study of North Indian Inscriptions (3rd century B.C. to 700 A.D.)"**

He has been serving in the Archaeological Survey of India for the last 35 years in various capacities. Presently he is working as **Director (Epigraphy)** for Sanskrit and Dravidian Inscriptions in Archaeological Survey of India, Mysore.

He has contributed a number of research papers on Indian Epigraphy to various journals and felicitation volumes. He is closely associated with the **Epigraphical Society of India and Place Names Society of India.**

Recently he had been to Cambodia, as a member of the Archaeological Survey of India team engaged in the conservation of the Ta Prohm temple and presented a paper on the **Sanskrit Inscriptions from Combodia** in the international workshop held there.



BOOK INDIA PUBLISHING CO.
68-C, L.I.G. Flats, Rampura, Delhi-110035
Ph.: 011-27392916
2006